TV GAMER

THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO CASSETTE AND CARTRIDGE GAMES

DECEMBER 1984 85p

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE
The best micros, peripherals, books and games

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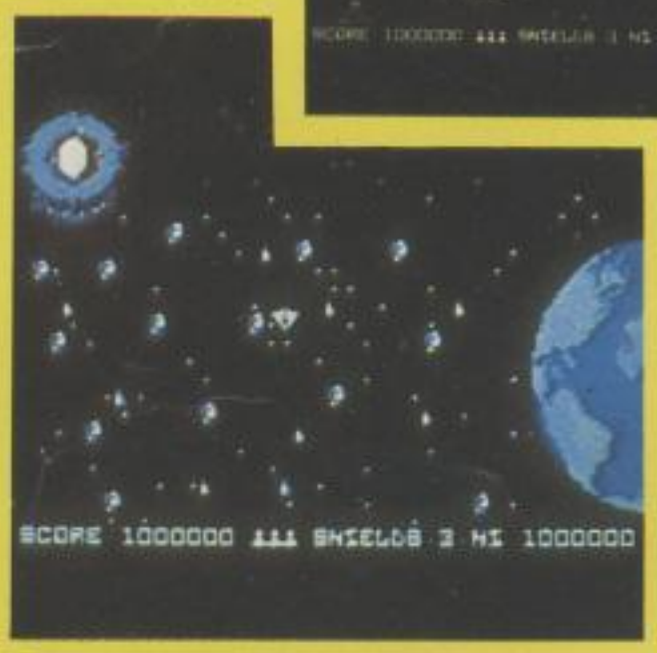

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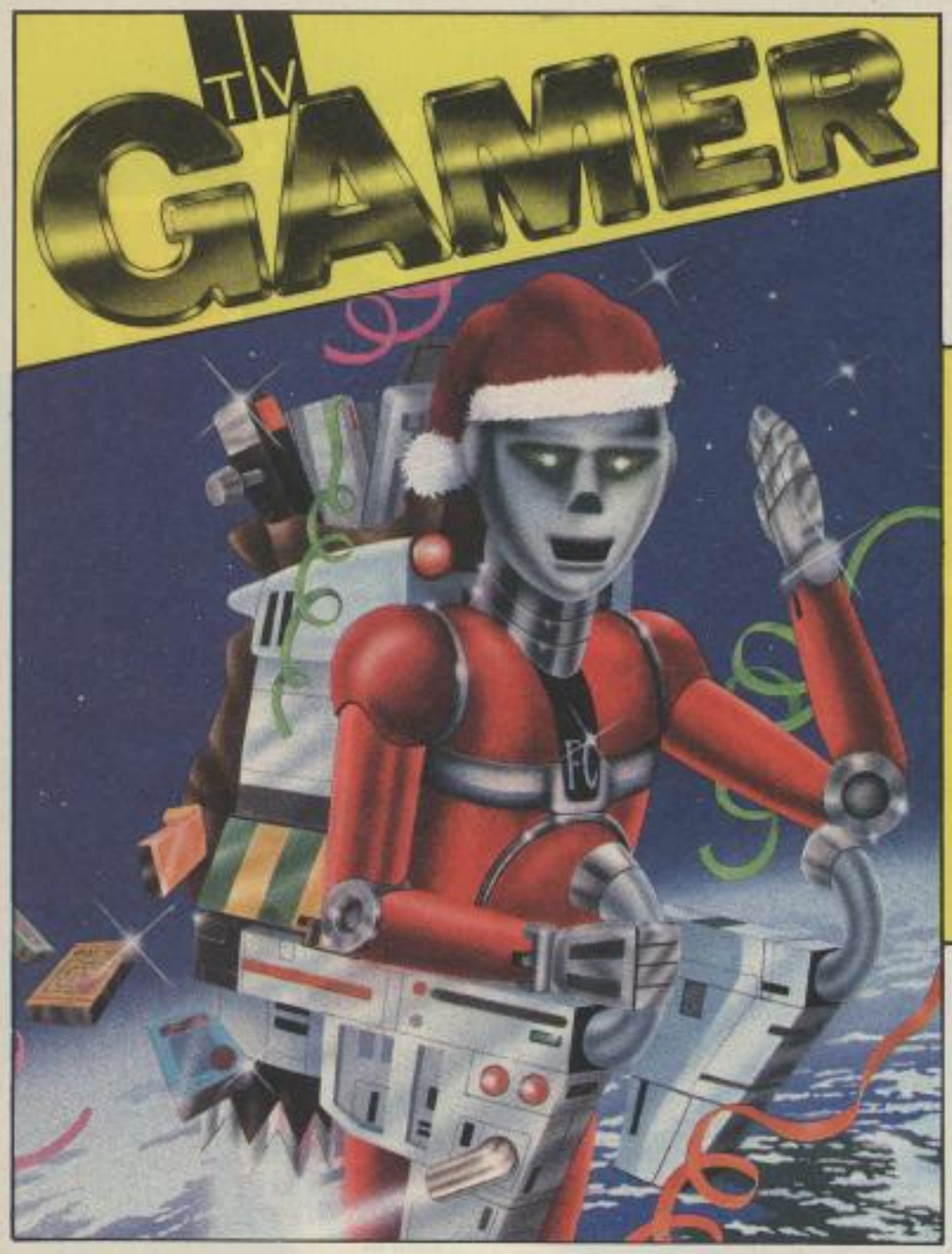

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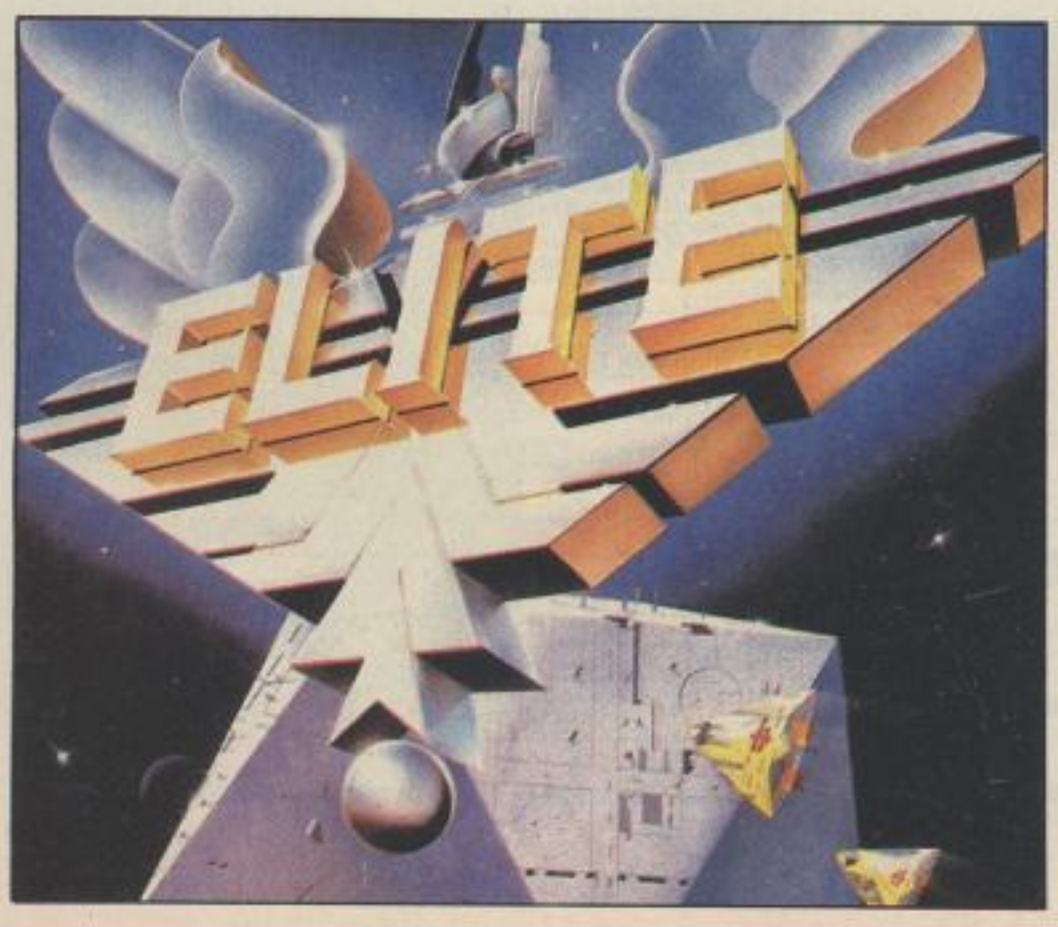

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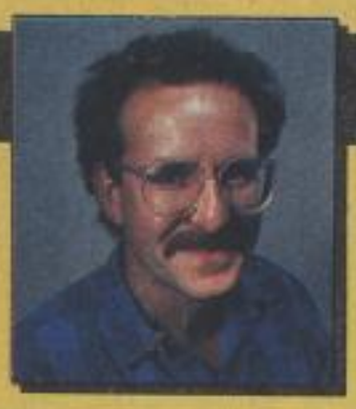
■ If you're first to ring it, you save the world and collect the £25,000!
■ Quite a package! And to give everyone a fair chance, "Eureka!" will be released simultaneously worldwide on October 31st, 1984. No packs will be available until that date. All orders received by mail or phone by 26th OCTOBER will be despatched by post on the 31st right across the world. So order now, and be one of the first off the mark.

High quality, full-colour, static and moving graphics

THEN THE RACE IS ON!!!



DEVISED BY IAN LIVINGSTONE

The storylines for "Eureka!" are by Ian Livingstone, whose "Fighting Fantasy" books have sold over 2,000,000 copies. He's dreamed up some rather nasty tricks and twists for you in this Epic, because he has also devised the cryptic clues and conundrums in the booklet that goes with the program. He's the one who knows the answers.

"Eureka!" was programmed by Andromeda teams led by Hungarians Donát Kiss and András Császár. It took the equivalent of 5 YEARS to create, and the skills of 4 graphic artists, 2 musicians and a professor of logic too. We told them to stretch the hardware's capabilities, and make sure you were kept awake for hours!! They've done it...

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SPECTRUM 48K		
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The race for the £25,000 starts on 31 Oct 1984 and closes on 31 Dec 1985.

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All contributions including colour transparencies and photographs submitted to the magazine are sent at the owner's risk and while every care is taken, neither Boytonbrook Ltd. nor its agents accept liability for loss or damage.

Printed by Southernprint Ltd.

Cover picture:
Christmas Gifts by Nick Sherwing

EDITOR ONLINE

Again, a warm hello – and to even more readers. I'm glad to say that the response to our November issue, with the *Storm Warrior* poster and £25,000 *Eureka!* article, has increased our circulation by over one-third.

This issue of TV Gamer appears on the book shelves just in time for Christmas. So I hope that our guide to the best buys in games, peripherals and micros helps you choose exactly what you need to get the most out of your games system.

The run up to Christmas has produced drastic contrasts in games. Obviously, with large sales in the offing at this time of year, manufacturers are rushing to release new products. But what a huge gap between these products!

Gamers are more choosy about what they buy. And so it is expected that about 50% of the software houses around now will no longer exist next year. The reasons why have never been so obvious.

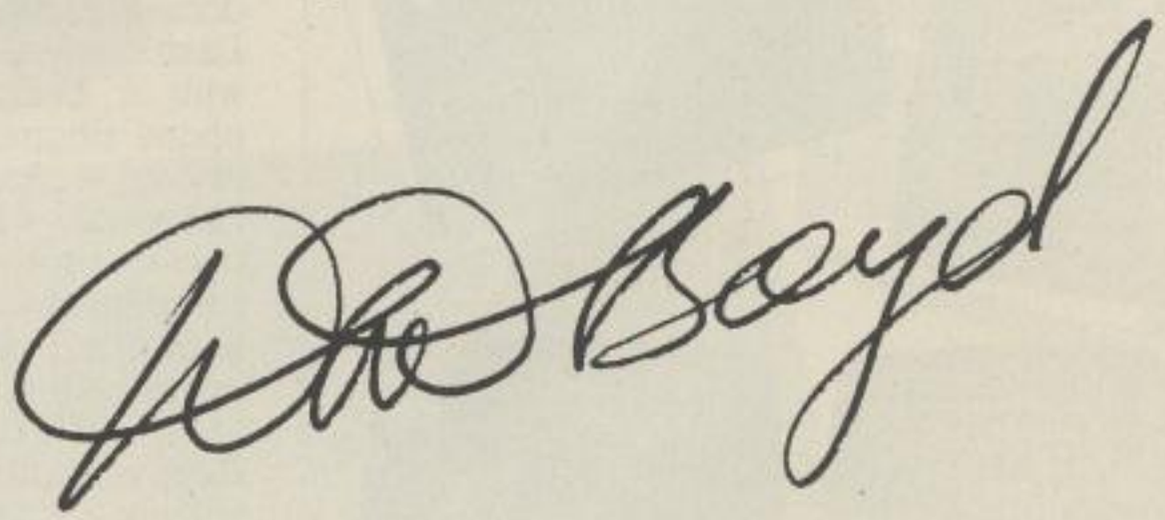
Prices give no indication of quality. You can usually rely on names such as Ultimate, Terminal, US Gold and Activision to be consistently good – and their games retail for under £10.00. Other cassettes – such as Acornsoft's *Elite* Domark's *Eureka!* and Select 1's collection of twelve top games – give top quality for about £15.00. But the bad games sell for as much.

Unfortunately, we've received our fair share of these. But at least we can advise out readers on which ones to save their money.

Some of these software houses have realised that it isn't easy to distinguish. So they have made videos of their games, which you can watch in selected shops. And top shops will let you play games before you buy. In all cases, find out as much as you can before parting with your money.

If you feel you've been done, do get in touch and we'll investigate the issue.

That apart – have a great Christmas!



THE £1 million GAME HOARD!

It's getting a bit like newspaper Bingo, with new games appearing carrying big-money prizes. The latest is by Commodore – and boasts a hoard worth £1 million in total.

The game is *Spirit Of The Stones*, but *Diamonds are Forever* would have been a good alternative, as playing involves finding forty-one of these precious rocks.

The story of *Spirit Of The Stones* goes back to the days of pirates, when smugglers used the Isle of Wight as a hiding place for contraband. One particular shipment had a sudden end when it was met by revenue men, muskets cocked. All the crew were slain, but the shipment of diamonds was never found.

Legend has it that the spirit of the cabin boy, Mark, distributed the forty-one diamonds all over the isle.

Your quest is to find forty Wight Eye talismans, each of which has a diamond in the centre. These have been hidden – but not buried – by the authors on the Isle of Wight, and each is worth ten shares of the royalty fund. This fund consists of 50 pence from every book sold until it reaches a ceiling of £1 million, or until December 1993, or until all the talismans have been found.

The talismans will also lead you to the Great Wight Eye, a large talisman featuring a diamond worth £12,000.

The £12.95 *Spirit Of The Stones* package consists of a cassette or disc for the CBM 64, a map of the Isle of Wight and a hardback book. Unlike *The Hobbit*, the book does not give clues to the game – it's the other way round. Solving the game gives you vital clues to solving the riddles in the book.

The game is along the lines of *Jet Set Willy*, but the rooms are connected via a scrolling onscreen map.

Fattening us up for Christmas. Acornsoft is releasing twenty new titles, which it hopes will help double sales for the last three months of 1984 to £2.5 million compared with the same period last year. There are three home interest titles in the range, including Christmas-bingeing before-and-after ideas such as a cocktail maker and a weight-watcher's program.

St Michael and British Telecom take on computer games. Marks & Spencer is readying itself to test-market computer games in six of its major stores, starting with three 'own-brand' titles retailing at £6.95.

Somewhat cheaper, at £2.50 each, British Telecom has released twenty games under the Firebird label for the Spectrum, CBM 64, Vic 20 and BBC.

Want to trade in your old model? A new fortnightly magazine called *Micro Mart* has been launched, devoted entirely to the buying and selling of second-hand computers and all that goes with them.

Don't rush out of the house without eating your breakfast. Unless, of course, you're already a member of the Weetabix Club. *Weetabix versus the Titchies* is a new game based on the funny TV ad characters. Available only from Weetabix at £3.75, it has been developed for eight makes of micro.

Feminists will be seething at boiling pots. Three games aimed at introducing the housewife to computers mimic "real-life" domestic situations. *Mad Dash* leaves the player with a boiling pot, telephone ringing and a baby crying. And *Harried Housewife* rewards the player for successfully completing her (his?) household chores with a warm bath and a rest.

Happy talk, talk, talk without a speech synthesiser. Tymac Talkies are fast-action computer games that talk to the player – without any extra hardware. This experience can be had by all CBM 64, Vic 20, Atari 400 and 800 owners for £9.95 to £14.95.

You'll fire power bolts at rughless attackers with *Gandalf*, search for treasures in *Pegasus And The Trials Of Perseus*, defend family honour in *Samurai*, battle deadly bacteria in your body in *Bio-Defence*, and survive nuclear destruction with *First Strike?*

See the January issue of *TV Gamer* for an in-depth review.

After Terrahawks and The Magic Roundabout, comes *Glug Glug*, a deep-sea diving game from CRL. Also released are three sporty programs: *Cricket 64*, *Handicap Golf* and *Showjumping*. All are for the CMB 64 and three have been translated for the Spectrum.

The computer-made film. This Christmas, a revolutionary film will be released in the UK. Twenty-one minutes of backgrounds and complete scenes were created using state-of-the-art computer graphics.

The story is just what gamers' dreams are made

of. Alex Rogan, a teenage arcade ace, has beaten the world record on the machine in the trailer park where he lives.

The machine is called Starfighter, and Alex soon finds out that it isn't just any old coin-op. It's a simulator linked to an alien world. And it's being monitored to fight a real interstellar war.

Alex meets Centauri, inventor of the simulator and a bit of a galactic Arthur Daley. He tricks Alex into joining him. To make things worse, an android replica of Alex (Beta) is put on Earth so no one will suspect anything has happened. But Beta's grasp of

human behaviour is sadly lacking – especially when it comes to Alex's girlfriend, Maggie.

The Last Starfighter is a landmark in motion picture history. It's the first film where objects are simulated using computer graphics, not intricate models. It won't win any prizes for the story line – but do see it for the graphics. Starring Lance Guest as Alex, it opens in London's West End on 12th December.

Next month, we take a closer look at the graphics from the film and the Cray X-MP supercomputer: the goliath behind the graphics.

The Beeb sets sail to take part in Operation Raleigh. Eleven BBC B micros are forming part of a satellite-linked computing laboratory on board the Sir Walter Raleigh flagship. They will assist young explorers in a round-the-world expedition which began on 13th November. Bon voyage!

Popeye, Minder and Hagar The Horrible are three titles forming part of a software scoop for DK Tronics. They will be in the shops next year for the Spectrum, CBM 64, Amstrad and MSX.

8,192 screens! This staggering number of locations has been incorporated in a new arcade adventure called *Cadcam Warrior*, just released from Taskset. Costing £9.95, up to four people can play at any one time.

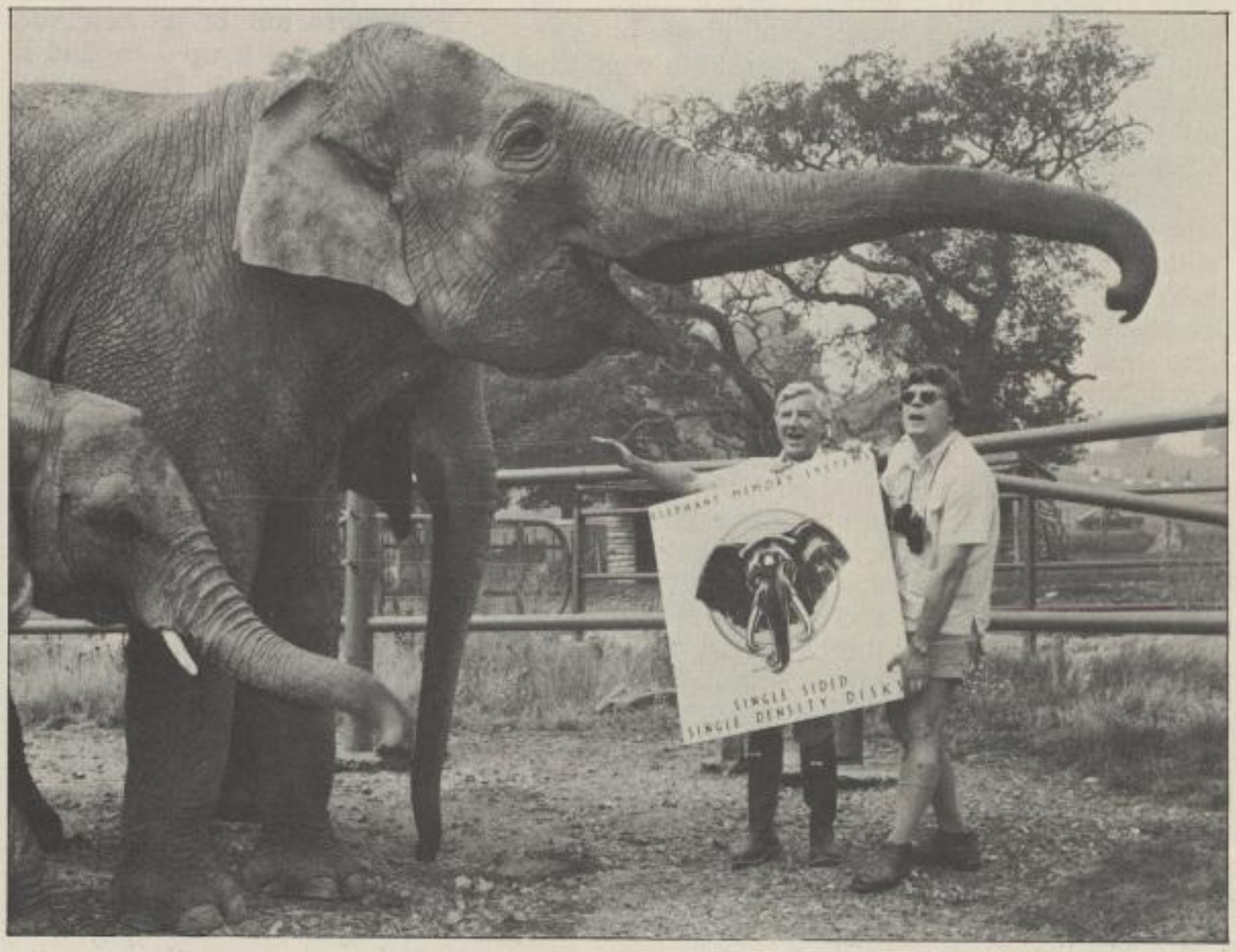
And 4,096 screens with 256 creatures to fight await the player on *Xavior*. This has just been released by PSS for the Spectrum at £5.95.

Where can you get hold of over £70 worth of games for only £12.49? Computer Records has put twelve popular games – from houses like Ocean, Quicksilva, Anirog and Bug-Byte – onto a single tape called *Select 1*. Familiar titles like *Hunchback, Kong, Mr Wimpy, Timegate* and *Denis Through The Drinking Glass* are included.

A new software house called Warlock has produced four £6.99 games for the BBC – *Galactic Patrol, Tycoon, Balloonacy* and *Devil's Causeway*.

"Out, damn spot!" No, not a new skin care product, but the famous words of Lady Macbeth. A group of disenchanted software writers have put their heads together to form Oxford Digital Enterprises. The idea is to educate through entertainment. *Macbeth* – a popular school curriculum drama – is the first computer adventure, cost £14.95.

Know your highway code. CRL is to release the first AA-approved highway code game on Spectrum and CBM 64.



Below: *The Spectrum+ unexpectedly released by Sinclair is similar to the original Spectrum, but has a full-stroke keyboard and a reset button to clear the computer without disconnecting the power supply. Cost: £179.95, including an eighty-page manual and six programs.*

Above: *US disc manufacturer Dennison brings its Elephant discs to the UK. Film buffs will recall what may be the discs' most famous moment: when they were used to break into NORAD's memory banks in* War Games.

Micro tactics for Christmas

Want a micro – but your parents are reluctant to buy you one? Dave Harvey comes up with something to help you: micro tactics. These are dedicated to getting a micro into your home this Christmas.

You should try subtlety – jabbing Dad in the stomach with a large pile of micro magazines won't do the trick. Be casual. Bulldoze into his office shouting through a built-in 72 billion watt PA system "Daaad, can I 'ave a computer".

If you can't get through to Dad, there's always Mum. Slip hints into your speech: "Cor, Mum, that's a nice dress you're wearing, and that perfume's out of this world – I see the Atari 800XL has gone down in price – that diet you've been on worked wonders, you look a new Commodore – er – woman".

Try Gran and Grandad. Tell them you can work out their bills for them with a micro. But you're in trouble if the reply is "No need for that. My calculator will do the job just as well. Look, I'll calculate the probability of you getting a micro this Christmas. V = u + at, s = ut+0.5at, v2 = u+2as/ g3.7s = a cat in hell's chance".

Don't give up. Here's a quiz to assess your chances of getting a micro this Christmas. Write your answers on a piece of paper, then check against the answers at the foot of the page.

Q1. A seemingly interested relation is thinking about going to see a demo of the computer you're after. Where do you tell her/him to go?

a) the boot menders (for kick starters)
b) the computer depart ment of a well-known shop
c) Channel 4
d) British Rail's schedul ing department.

Q2. Having persuaded your relation to buy you a micro, you will also need some software. How do you go about getting it?

a) wait until it's dark and break into the local micro shop
b) go to your local hardware shop
c) leave an issue of *TV Gamer* featuring cheap games lying 'inconspicuously' around the house
d) say "gimme some games".

Q3. The local micro dealer is selling a printer cheaply – and you want it. How do you persuade your relations to buy it?

a) tell them it can print your high scores to show off?
b) say you can write your thank-you letter for the printer with it?
c) say it can print bar codes to confuse supermarket goods?
d) say you can earn money by writing articles with it, use its graphs for homework, and can lend it to your parents for their business and personal correspondence and files.

Q4. You've taken your micro out of its box and have set it up – to find it doesn't work. Do you

a) pour it a light ale?
b) give it an aspirin?
c) boot it?
d) read the instruction manual?

Q5. It's Christmas day, and you want to play games on your micro. But everyone's watching the James Bond film on the only TV. What do you do?

a) wait until the film has ended
b) forget popularity, lunge forward and switch channels
c) start an argument
d) plan how to get it on Boxing day.

SCORING

0-1 means you've as much chance of getting a micro this Christmas as Jeff Minter will forget about camels, llamas and sheep.

2-3 means you might have a chance – if you read this issue of *TV Gamer* from cover to cover.

4 is jolly good!

5 – shhhhhh! No one likes a smart alec. Besides, you don't want to let on how you got that micro.

LAST RESORT

If you haven't persuaded anyone to buy you a micro, copy this out in bold print. Write your name on, and fold it over at the dotted line so that only the lower half shows. Then ask a relation – preferably rich and myopic – for their autograph. Once you've got it, open the document out.

I, the undersigned, hereby promise to buy a .....micro for Christmas.

SIGNED.....

ANSWERS

1: b 2: c 3: d 4: d 5: a – but you'll probably try d also.

OWN UP! WHO'S NOBBLED THE **CHRISTMAS PUDDING.?!**

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Explosive Action!

Feel your temperature rise as you battle to control the overheating boilers. Your challenge is to fight and defeat the machinery, but the pressure can become intolerable!
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Delete as applicable

I would like to hear news of more Front Runner releases ☐ Yes

Please allow 21 days for delivery.

Front Runner

Meet the Challenge

MICRONET UPDATE

Perhaps you've read the book or seen the film 1984, and been disturbed by the implications of the new technological age. Or perhaps you have a micro at home and wonder what the fuss is about and how you can tap into this technology. Or perhaps you want immediate contact with thousands of people, or to send and receive games by the score from your home. Micronet 800 has designed this facility for you, Lorraine Cox writes.

You can do it with a simple mix of your micro, a modem to translate the computer signals, a telephone and a TV. An identity number and password give you immediate access to six mainframes around the UK.

Through this viewdata network, you can book holidays, find out what's on at the cinema or local sports centre, read the latest news, or buy goods directly from such stores as WH Smith and Debenham's. All this is stored on 350,000 frames or pages. To find out more, goto *800#.

Downloadable games have a special section, backed by Micronetters' comments and reviews. There is also a top forty and a top ten chart to show the favourites.

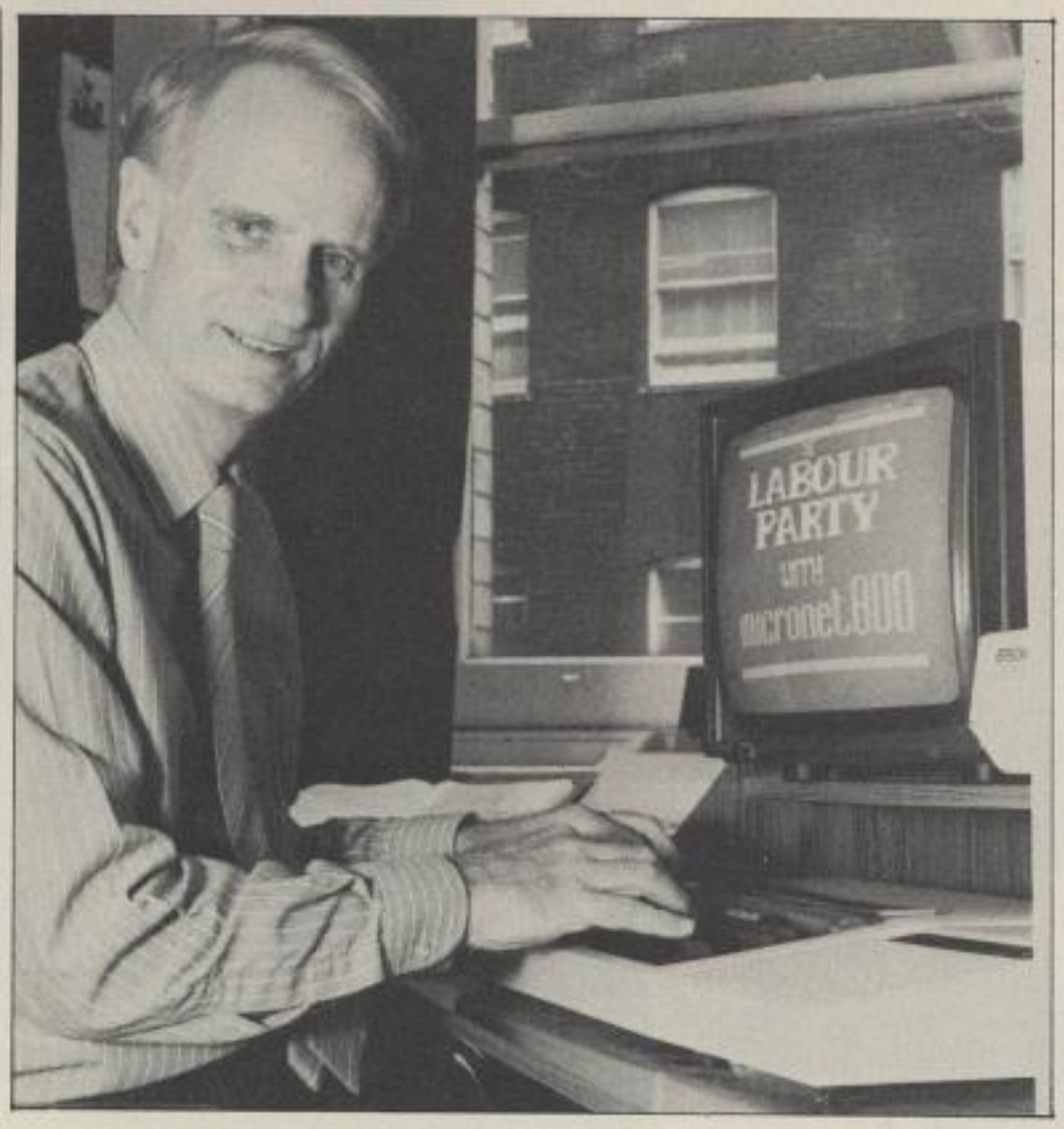
The star program for the BBC is currently *Proteans* by DK Tronics. Whisked to a strange oceanic planet, Pelagove, you must fight hoards of multiform proteans in waves. To download, goto *600611888#.

Perhaps you'd prefer to go to sea, as commander of a frigate on page *600611759#. There, you obliterate the lurking submarines in *Subkiller* by DK Tronics with your depth charges. Cost: £5.55.

If you have a Spectrum, goto *700670309# for a free star program. This is a utility which lets you store an autopage of your favourite pages and subjects. The number one utility is found on *600614819#. Called *User-To-User*, it's by OEL at £3.49, and allows you to prepare messages and data offline eliminating the Prestel connection.

For a 3D game, goto *600614858#. You'll be lost in a maze, pursued by vicious vampire bats, in *3D Bat Attack* by Spectrum Programs. Your only means of survival are quick thinking and garlic!

There's also little chance of survival in *Digger Dan* on *600614703#. There, you're forced to beat off monsters with a spade.



Above: Micronet 800 is now used by the Labour party to contact each other.

If you want to follow a real-life adventure, route to the News area and to page *800119371#. A five-man expedition is setting off to the Antartic armed with a QL computer! The 900-mile walk to the South Pole will last a year, following in Scott's footsteps. The purpose of taking the QL is to calculate data and eventually write a book.

For video and camera owners, there's a new service. If you have a problem with your machine, fill in the response frame – an electronic coupon – on page *800113096#. You'll get an answer in forty-eight hours.

Planning to stock your shelves with videos for Christmas? Micronet lists the most popular and reviews them. Included are *Evil That Men Do, Where The Boys Are, Terms Of Endearment* and *Breakdance*.

Now you can access Micronet free! It's now operating in most micro stores and Lasky's and Boot's in the Midlands, North West and London regions. So if you want to look at the database, visit your local store or use the identity number 4444444444 and password 4444. For more information on Micronet in shops, telephone 01-278 3143.

Micronet wishes you a happy Christmas – goto *6016121# for our electronic Christmas message.

John Sanders goes to Cannes to visit MIJID – the microcomputer offshoot of the annual Vidcom show, now in its second year.

MIJID was used as a display case by sixty-two exhibitors. Forty-eight of these were French and twelve British; there was one exhibitor each from Monaco and the US. 10,000 visitors came to see what they offered.

Because of the large UK presence, information was rather less than international. But the show did give some insights into French and UK home micros.

The general feeling at MIJID was that the MSX system, in spite of its high price and relatively old technology, has an excellent chance of gaining a significant slice of the French market. But there were doubts voiced regarding the system's future in the UK.

Yvan Coriat is from Vectron France which imports Imagic products. He said that MSX will succeed because of the "mighty muscle" of the Japanese companies. "Even though it is old technology, they market it well – it will be like VHS video all over again." (VHS videos have now officially won the battle against the Beta videos)

Philips, too, will be launching its MSX machines in coutnries which, like France, have yet to establish a home computer market on the scale of the UK's. Philip's launch of MSX into the UK is likely to be delayed into the new year, with the company prudently waiting for the official marketing drive to come from its Japanese format mates.

Sanyo has been selling MSX machines in France since 1st September, ahead of the UK. It has a selection of twenty-five cartridges and forty-five cassettes. This software base will rise to 150 titles by Christmas at a price of 3,000 francs (just under £300). It claims to have sold 10,000 units in the first month of launch, and hopes to sell as many as 100,000 next year.

Thomson, the French communications giant, has promised to introduce into Europe – and maybe the UK – its T07/70 home computer. This looks like any other micro – but Thomsom has added educational applications to it.

It has developed a video mixer interface with which you can combine a video signal with the computer output. This means that a home movie can be captioned, subtitled or given date and time.

Or – and this is more exciting – a still video picture can be retouched using a light pen. Great fun was had by visitors at the show watching Thomson's artist giving President Reagan's photograph a new, punk green Mohican hairstyle!

Another interesting feature of the T07/70 is a logivision interface to operate with a laser vision disc player – Philip's VLP830 – for interactive learning. And Thomson has also developed a telephone modem interface to use the computer as a videotext terminal.

Thomson is obviously proud of its T07/70 – an official told me it is making 400,000 computers next year, including some for export.

Among the UK companies trying to sell their products into the European market was ☛

Interview

Opportunity Knocks.

This is your big chance – the top programmer's job. All you have to do is be at the right place at the right time.

But don't be deceived, the competition is tough out there!

Due to the complexity of its outstanding graphics and challenging game play, Interview is a multi-load game using the Novaload fast load system on tape.

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Tape £7.95
Disk £9.95 inc. VAT.
Commodore 64

**To: Front Runner, K-soft distribution,
620 Western Avenue, London W3 0TU**

Rush me_____ Tape(s)_____ Disk(s) of Interview

Name _____

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I enclose a cheque/PO made payable to
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or debit my Access/Visa*_____
Delete as applicable

I would like to hear news of more Front Runner releases ☐ Yes

Please allow 21 days for delivery.

FRONT Runner

Meet the Challenge

Acorn with its BBC micro. *Elite*, of course, was the game on display with it. Spokesman Martin Lowry boasted that French schools seemed more interested in the good old Beeb than in the more familiar Thomson product. Lowry observed that the Acornsoft educational program list was "over twice the size of Thomson's" and the strongest point of a computer is its software.

But Lowry is chauvinistic about the BBC micro. While admitting that MSX could be a major competitor in two years' time, he said that the BBC micro still had "a minimum of four years' life" left, and was "technically superior to MSX".

At the show, several UK cable operators expressed interest in downloading games via cable. The Thorn EMI stand was the centre for discussion. Let's hope it's taken seriously and we'll see the games out of the testbeds soon.

Despite its financial troubles here, the most celebrated computer in France is the Oric. Many UK visitors to the show expressed amazement that a computer which has not sold well here should be so dominant in France. Well-known companies such as Sinclair and Commodore suggested that it was chance: Oric was able to provide plenty of computers when demand was high in France, and other companies were preoccupied with the UK.

Naturally, Oric-France's Denis Taieb doesn't agree with this. "It's down to professional marketing," he said. "We gave our dealers real support, with plenty of software and lots of information. This meant that they were able to persuade customers that they were getting a good product."

He continued to say that Oric-France offers 200 French software titles, plus, of course, all the English ones. 100,000 Orics were sold between March 1983 and March 1984. This represented 30% of the French market. With the market now much bigger, and with the competition from MSX, Taieb doubted whether he will be able to preserve this share. But, obviously, he expects to sell many more.

Sinclair has recently established sales offices in France and Germany, so was obviously an exhibitor at MIJID. An official explained that it had sold many micros in France before the Oric. In 1982, 200,000 ZX81s were sold. Now Sinclair claims that it has 30% of the home micro population in France – but a lot of this must be made up of all those ZX81s. And it's still going strong. Sinclair expects to sell 40,000 ZX81 starter kits at 650 francs each (about £55) before Christmas.

Christmas sales of the Spectrum, too, are expected to reach this level. And next year the company plans to move over more fully into sales of the Spectrum and Spectrum+.

The QL was launched at the time of the show, and attracted a great deal of interest. Many passers-by wanted a demonstration. But – surprise, surprise? – no one at Sinclair was prepared to set a target for the near future of this micro.

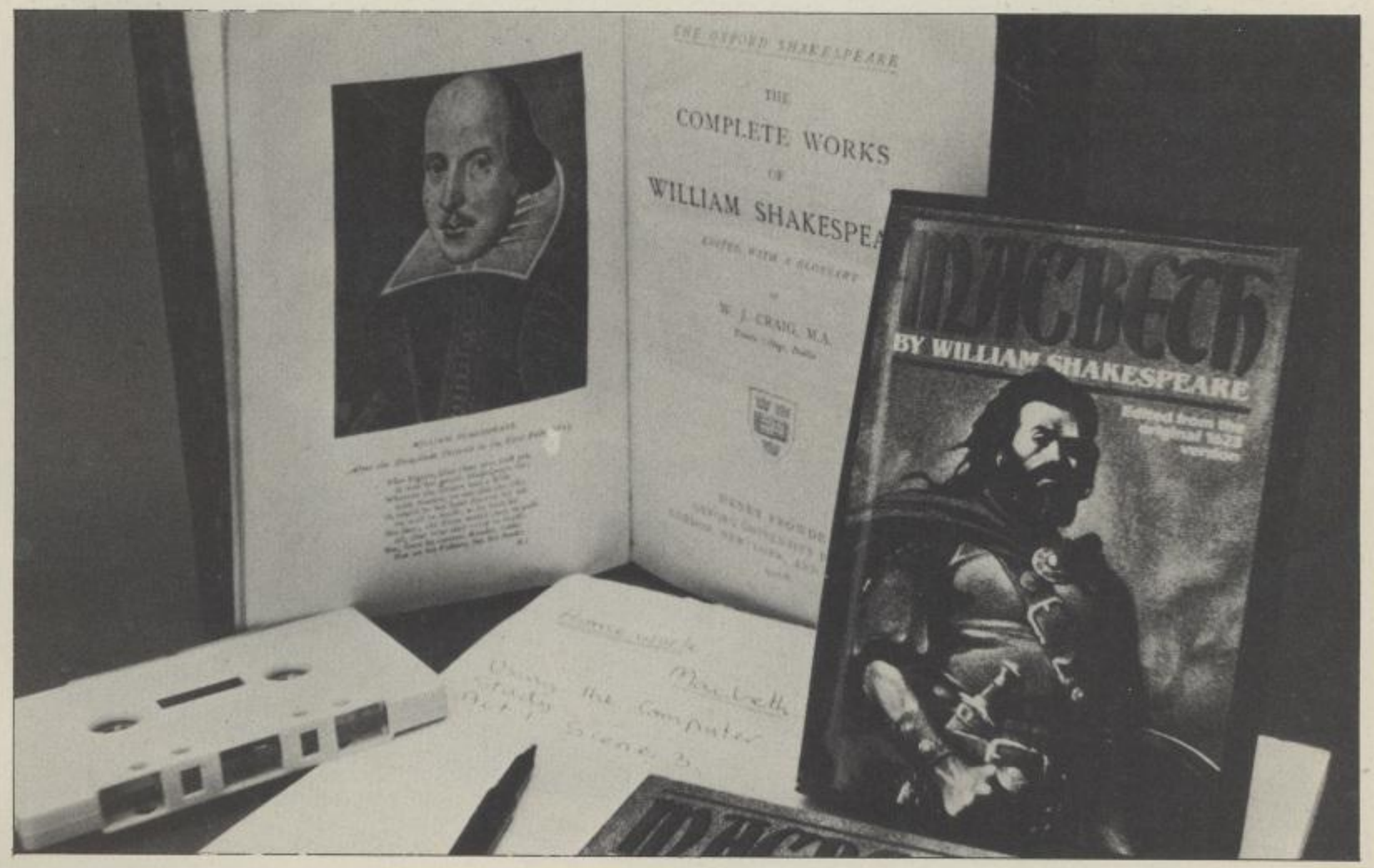
One barrier to games flow between the UK and France is that French TV works on Secam rather than Pal. The Secam TVs can't deal directly with computer RF outputs. Fortunately, since 1980, French TV manufacturing standards have specified a compulsory "peritel RGB interface". So those computers with RGB output can be used directly in France without modification. Other micros need an awkward twelve-volt adaptor between computer and TV, as would all micros used with older TVs.

For this reason, the newer computers – like MSX – meet with relatively little sales resistance in France.

Here in the UK, we think we've seen every micro ever made. But I saw two exclusively French computers at MIJID, apart from Thomson's T07/70. These are the 64K Hector and Exelvision.

Hector is a remarkable example of sales manager determination. The company has sold 20,000 units and has provided 120 programs, all created by the manufacturers. There is no third-party software.

The Exelvision had, at my count, only eight programs, including a music synthesiser. But it offered an infra-red games controller, video mixer input, and a voice synthesiser with some games.



COVER STORY

CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE

This issue's cover story is divided into three: the add-ons for your micro, books with more information, and the best games micros around.
Deirdre Boyd starts with a look at some essential peripherals.

Christmas is traditionally the season of giving – and receiving. It's the best time of year to add to, or start, your games system.

There are so many peripherals – or add-ons – for your micro nowadays that any choice must be personal. You won't find an analysis of every peripheral in this article – there isn't room. Nor have I mentioned memory upgrades where games for them are virtually nonexistant. What you will find are the proven reliable, value-for-money products that support a large number of games.

A datassette must be your first buy if you own a Commodore 64 or an Atari. Other micros can play data tapes from conventional music cassette recorders if those recorders are on the right frequency. But it's worth noting that recorders manufactured especially for data storage give much higher quality, and are more reliable. A lead to connect a recorder to your micro costs about £3.

Joysticks are usually the first buy for owners of other machines. Again, Commodore and Atari have their own makes which are interchangeable. BBC joysticks plug into the analogue port so are fifteen-way rather than the standard nine-way. And the Spectrum needs an interface to use your joystick.

There are three basic types of joystick: four-directional, eight-directional and the 360° potentiometer. Joysticks at the lower end of the scale will have only one fire button, others will have two, with an option for rapid fire. Most joysticks have suction pads on their base to fix them. Ignore these if you're dithering on choice.

For two-player games, you can buy a pair of joysticks joined just before the interface to fit into one port.

Memory upgrades are also high on the priority list of micros with less than 32K. These usually appear as 16K or 32K Rom cartridges. Check carefully before you buy – prices vary enormously. And for Spectrum owners, Cheetah makes an upgrade that fits to the outer casing. This removes the need to send your machine back to the manufacturer for upgrading, or losing your guarantee by doing it yourself.

Disc drives are the other obvious method of upgrading. But they are expensive – about £200. So they're used mostly for small businesses, and there aren't many disc games. Rumour has it that prices may halve.

Monitors and TV sets are also popular buys. Prices again vary enormously – and the choice is difficult. A family with a TV will soon want to buy a second screen, as battles erupt between watching TV programmes or playing computer games. A second TV allows you to play games, and watch other channels when you stop. The screen on a monitor has higher resolution and so gives a clearer picture.

Finally, you can buy a modem. This connects your micro to Prestel with its 1000s of pages of news – and to Micronet with its hundreds of games pages. The cost varies from £75 to £150, depending on your micro and modem manufacturer.

AMSTRAD CPC464

The Amstrad comes with its own datassette and monitor – the difference between colour and black and white is £100.

Amstrad's joystick is four-directional with one fire button. An unusual feature is a socket in its base to take a second joystick. Cost: £14.95.

There is also a disc drive with 178K storage per 3" single-sided double-density disc. You'll need an interface. Total cost is £199.95. If you want to add a second disc drive, you won't need another interface, so the cost is reduced to £159.95.

ATARI 800XL

Most of the peripherals for this machine have been made by Atari. The range includes:

1010 datassette, £34.99. This can store 100K on each 60-minute tape. Price includes a guide, lead, and AC power adaptor;

CX40 joystick, £7.99. This is four-directional with one fire button on the top left of the base;

Super Controller, £9.99. This is eight-directional and self centred. It has two fire buttons, to accommodate right- or left-handed players;

Trak-Ball, £19.99. The first thing you notice about this is that a ball is sunk into the base, replacing the usual upright stick. Rolling the ball lets you turn corners tightly and blast more accurately. There are two side-mounted fire buttons;

1050 disc drive, £199.99. This stores up to 127K on each dual-density, single-sided 5.25" floppy disc used. Price includes three manuals, master disc, lead, AC adaptor.

Right: Atari's Trakball gives 360° movement.

BBC

As mentioned above, the BBC takes a nonstandard joystick. Personally, Acorn's joystick is not a favourite. You would do better to buy Voltmace's three-fire button joystick. It plugs into the analogue port and costs £12. A linked pair of these for two-player games costs £19.95.

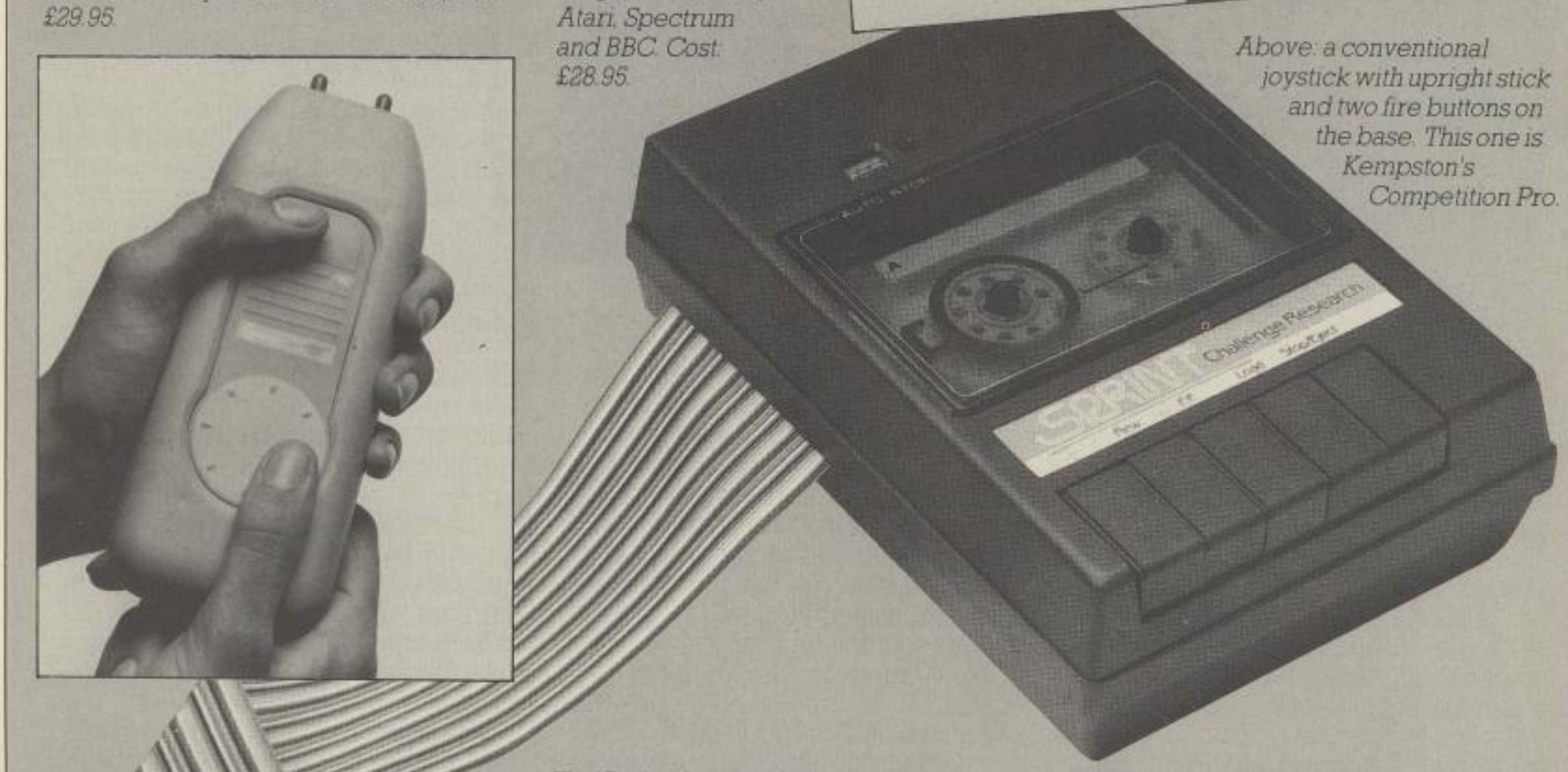
Kempston's £16.95 joystick is based on the Competition Pro 5000 series. It is eight-directional with two

CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE

COVER STORY

Below: Cheetah's RAT uses infra-red signals, like a remote control. RAT and interface, for Spectrum and CBM 64, cost £29.95.

The arcade professional by Euromax, at the top of the joystick range, fits CBM 64, Atari, Spectrum and BBC. Cost: £28.95.



Above: a conventional joystick with upright stick and two fire buttons on the base. This one is Kempston's Competition Pro.

The Sprint datassette from Challenge Research costs £64.95, but Spectrum programs load four times faster. A Commodore version is planned.

fire buttons, and matches the cream and brown of the BBC. Euromax's range of joysticks can also be tailored for the BBC. Prices start at £15.95.

Alternatively, Wizard Development makes an interface which will take two Atari-style joysticks. This costs £14.95 plus 60p postage and packaging. It also sells the Quickshot II at £9.95.

Opus Supplies' disc drives start at £129. These store 100K per 5.25" single-sided 40-track disc. Micro Peripherals also sells a range of 3", 3.5" and 5.25" formatted disc drives. Prices start from £132 plus VAT.

COMMODORE 64

Commodore makes a range of peripherals. These include the 1530 datassette at £44.95 and the 1541 disc drive at £229. The latter stores 170K on 5.25" single-sided discs. Commodore's joystick costs £7.50, and is eight-directional with one fire button. There is also a 14" monitor for £230.

Commodore has its own communications network, called Compunet. The modem for this costs £99.99, and the first year's subscription is free.

Apart from Commodore, Atari and Euromax joysticks are also compatible with this micro. And Currah makes the most user-friendly speech unit. Just type SAY " and what you want heard, then type " and press Return. You'll hear everything you typed between the inverted commas through the TV. Cost: £30.

MSX

The MSX machines have only recently been released, but already there are quite a few peripherals for them.

All joysticks have two fire buttons, with prices ranging from £12.95 for those from Sanyo, JVC and Toshiba to £19.95 from Sony.

Two datassettes – one AC/DC – are available from Sanyo, each at £34.95. Top of its range is the DR202 recorder which costs £10 more.

The light pen from Sanyo is very costly: £89.95. If you're interested in graphics design, it would be worth waiting to see if the price comes down.

The same story applies to disc drives. Sony's stores 500K and uses 3.5" discs – but costs £349.95.

The MSX companies have long been associated with TV sets. So accompanying the micro range you will find colour TVs at £179.95 from Sanyo and £189.95 from Toshiba. For £269.95 you get a TV set cum monitor from JVC and Fisher.

COVER STORY

CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE

The Fischer pop carry case is a fun way of storing games tapes. They hold ten tapes, and have a patented spool so that tapes won't unwind. Cost: £10.

Acorn's Plus One screws to the bottom of the Electron to give it joystick, cartridge and printer interfaces. Cost: £59.90.

SPECTRUM 48K

The Spectrum must have more peripherals than any other. First, obviously, comes the interface. The cheapest we've seen comes from DK Tronics. Costing £13, it takes two Atari-style joysticks. For £22.95, DK Tronics supplies a programmable one-joystick interface with seventeen-directional movement, microdrive compatibility, and a rear connector for other add-ons.

Ram Electronic's Turbo interface takes two Kempston or Protek joysticks and a cartridge, and has a rear connector. Cost: £22.95 plus £1 postage and packing. If you buy the Quickshot II joystick at the same time, the price is reduced by £3 to £9.95.

Sinclair's Interface II takes two joysticks of any standard plug and a cartridge, but has a limited rear connector. Cost: £19.95.

The Quickshot I joystick from DK Tronics is four-directional, with two fire buttons. The Quickshot II has a sturdier handle shaped to your hand, and the second fire button will give rapid fire. The prices are £9.95 and £12.95 respectively.

The Kempston Competition Pro joystick must be as old as the Spectrum – and is probably the best known. Once the leader in the field, it's eight-directional with two fire buttons, and sells for £11.95. If you buy this joystick, check that the games you like are compatible. Also from Kempston is the cheapest joystick: the Junior Pro, at £5.99. If you buy before Christmas, the Junior Pro and interface will total £14.99.

As any Spectrum owner knows, sound is virtually nil. DK Tronics sells two interfaces with 4" speaker to amplify it. The £14.95 version amplifies the BEEP output; the £29.95 version also has a three-channel sound synthesiser. It allows you to program your own music with harmonies, explosions, zaps, chimes, whistles, and other sounds over eight octaves.

The last most popular buy for the Spectrum is a keyboard to replace its squishy non-tactile one. One of the cheapest, at £28.50, is from Kelwood Computer Cases. It replaces the keys and switches with a top of their own, leaving the rear of the Spectrum unaltered for interfaces.

DK Tronic's microdrive compatible keyboard is £45.

WHERE TO CONTACT THE SUPPLIERS

Acorn Computers,
Fulbourn Road, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 4JN.

Amstrad,
Brentwood House, 169 King's Rd, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EF.

Atari Corporation,
Atari House, Railway Tce, Slough, Berks SL2 5BZ.

Cheetah Marketing,
24 Ray St, London EC1R 3DJ.

Commodore Business Machines,
1 Hunters Rd, Weldon, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 1QX.

Currah,
North House, 17 North St, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 8DF.

DK Tronics,
Unit 6, Shire Hill Ind Estate, Saffron Waldon, Essex CB11 3AQ.

Euromax Electronics,
Pinfold Lane, Bridlington, North Humberside YO16 5XR.

Kelwood Computer Cases,
Downs Row, Moorgate, Rotherham S60 2HD.

Kempston Micro Electronics,
Unit 30, Singer Way, Woburn Rd Ind Estate, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7AF.

Micro Peripherals,
60 The Street, Basing, Basingstoke, Hants RG42 0BY.

Opus Supplies,
158 Camberwell Rd, London SE5 0EE.

Ram Electronics,
106 Fleet Road, Fleet, Hampshire GU13 8PA

Romag Safety Glass,
Patterson St, Blaydon-on-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE21 5SG.

Sinclair Research,
Stanhope Rd, Camberley, Surrey GU15 3PS.

Voltmace,
Park Drive, Baldock, Herts SG7 GEW.

Wizard Development,
22 Carver St, Sheffield S1 4FS.

CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE

Want to know the solution to that frustrating adventure? Or some good game programs? Or more about your micro? A book is the obvious answer. These are some of TVG's favourites.

COMPUTER SPACE GAMES
COMPUTER BATTLE GAMES
Price: £2.25 paperback, £4.50 hardback
Machines covered: C64, Spectrum, BBC, Vic 20, Apple, TRS 80, Electron, ZX81
Publisher: Usborne Publishing, 20 Garrick Street, London WC2E 9BJ
These two books are an excellent introduction to programming your own games. Each program given starts with an explanation of the plot. Beside each section of inputs is an explanation of what those inputs do. This may range from giving monsters names, to changing the numbers of foes, to checks that you're not cheating.

Each book contains about eighteen game programs. The games are in Basic, which can vary between machines.

All the games here will run on the ZX81; if any lines need changing for another machine, they are given at the end of the game.

The books end with a summary of Basic, a conversion chart, and tips on altering the games if you wish.

These books are fun, and an easy way to slip into what is normally shown as tedious programming.

Also by Usborne are *Weird Computer Games, Creepy Computer Games* and *Computer Spy Games* at 99p, and adventure books at £1.95. The range includes instructional books, with prices ranging from £1.99 for paperback to £6.95 for hardback.

MICRONET BOOK
Price: £6.95
Machine covered: Spectrum
Publisher: Melbourne House, Castle Yard House, Castle Yard, Richmond TW10 6TF
A Micronet news page appears in *TVG* every month. Micronet modems are now available for Spectrum, BBC, Commodore, ZX81, Research Machines, TRS80, Apple, Pet and Dragon. This book covers the Spectrum specifically, and other machines generally.

This book was written by Alan Giles, who worked with Prestel for seven years. He gives the history of Micronet and its development, explains exactly how the hardware works, how to manipulate the software, and avail of Micronet's mailbox and other facilities. He continues to show how you can contact other Micronet users – not necessarily Spectrum owners.

The whole is illustrated with photographs of the hardware, codes, and diagrams of how the system works.

COMMODORE 64, GAMES BOOK 2
Price: £6.95
Machine covered: C64
Publisher: Melbourne House (address as before)
This is the follow up to the popular *Commodore 64 Games Book*. Like its predecessor, it contains thirty original games programs. They range from shoot 'em ups to maze to strategy, and each is illustrated with a screen photograph.

There are two nice bonuses in this book. The first is the Chexsum/Merge program validator. When keying in numerous lines, it is only too easy to make a mistake. You can then spend ages trying to find it. These two short programs tell you on exactly what line an error occurs.

The second bonus is an explanation before each few lines of input of what they do.

MSX – AN INTRODUCTION
Price: £12.95, with cassette
Machines covered: MSX
Publisher: Century Communications, 12-13 Greek Street, London W1V 5LE
The article on micros on the next few pages explains why MSX might have the biggest impact of any micro on games. If you decide to go for one, this book will be an invaluable programming tool.

It starts with a brief explanation of MSX standardisation, then goes into more detail about the hardware, memory, storage mediums, keyboard, peripherals, functions and programming principles.

The next section of the book is devoted to comprehensive explanations of over seventy of the most important MSX Basic commands and statements. This includes the essentials of how they're strung together to form programs.

This is followed by chapters on sound, graphics, working with numbers, and interacting with programs.

Finally, for BBC, Spectrum, Commodore and Oric adventurers who can't solve *The Hobbit*, Melbourne House has produced *A Guide To Playing The Hobbit*.

Your fun won't be spoiled, as there are many solutions to this interactive bestseller. This is but one, and will help you to discover others. The price is £3.95.

TV GAMERSALE!

Due to your response to our September games offer we've decided to do it again, but with more titles and lower prices.

And we have uncovered some more bargains for you. Software companies often have small stocks of older games, or games for less popular computers, which they are prepared to sell at bargain prices. And for the VCS we have found some cartridges which have not generally been sold here before now - real rarities! There are limited stocks of some of the offers, and it's 'first come, first served', so don't delay!

COMPUTER GAMES CASSETTES FROM AVALON HILL

SUITABLE FOR:

APPLE

ATARI 400/800 (not XL's)

COMMODORE PET

TRS 80

GYPSY RSP £15.95 **Sale Price £3.95**
No, nothing to do with painted caravans. You are a Gypsy Moth trying to eat the leaves of your favourite tree, beset by ants, bees and spiders. Food gives you strength, bites and stings make you weak. Can you survive? (One player)

LEGIONNAIRE RSP £25.95 **Sale Price £6.95**
A superb introduction to the world of Wargaming. It's a real-time simulation of battle in the days of the Romans. You are Caesar, and command ten legions against a barbarian horde. Each legion and barbarian tribe is different, and effects like fatigue and morale are included. (One player)

MOON PATROL RSP £18.95 **Sale £4.95**
Arcade-style game of Lunar invasion. Four levels of increasing difficulty, each with new attackers. The green ones are bad enough, but the red ones are deadly! (One or two players.)

SHOOTOUT RSP £14.95 **Sale £3.95**
The full title is "Shootout at the OK Galaxy", and it's a graphic arcade-style fight that took over two years to make. 30 alien warships have entered your patrol zone – and now it's up to you... (One player)

£

CARTRIDGES FOR ATARI VCS

BLUE PRINT Find the parts of your gun and the missing plans, and you might be in time to rescue your girlfriend... if the bad guys let you! And it's all in a maze, too. For 1 or 2 players.
CARNIVAL Shooting game for 1 or 2 players, set in a fairground shooting gallery. Aim straight and watch those ducks...
GORF Arcade action for 1 player. Defeat the invading aliens in this challenging adaptation of an arcade classic.
MARINE WARS Sea battle with ships and aircraft for 1 or 2 players.
MR DO! Guide Mr Do round his orchard collecting cherries, if the Badguys will let you! Based on the well-known arcade game. For 1 or 2 players.
POO YAN Children's game for 1 or 2 players, where you have to help Mother Pig rescue her piglets from Wolves.
SMURF Children's Adventure for 1 player, based on the TV series. Rescue Smurfette from the haunted castle.
STRATEGY X Tank battle for 1 or 2 nimble fingered and alert players.
SOLAR FOX Command a space fighter clearing solar cells from a selection of 20 patterns. Special child and parent versions, too! Based on an arcade game. For 1 or 2 players.
VENTURE Shooting/Adventure for 1 player. You rush round rooms shooting little beasties and collecting treasure.

£7.95 for one, or £14.95 for two.

£

CARTRIDGES FOR INTELLIVISION

DONKEY KONG JUNIOR A sequel to Donkey Kong, but this time Kong is trapped and has to be rescued by his monkey son! For 1 or 2 players.
LADY BUG A Maze game, but with moveable walls. 1 or 2 players.
VENTURE Adventure-type game based on an arcade hit. Can you guide 'Winky' through a house collecting treasure and avoiding ghouls and monsters? 1 or 2 players.
CARNIVAL Shooting game for 1 or 2 players, set in a fairground shooting gallery.

£7.95 for one, or £14.95 for two.

£

All you have to do is ring round the titles you want, (not forgeting to ring which computer you want the Avalon Hill games for), and enter the totals in the 'cash' column. There are no extras: postage, packing and VAT are included. Then complete your name and address, and tear out the whole page (or copy it if you don't want to spoil the magazine).

Send it with your cheque or Postal Order (payable to TV Gamer) to: *Sales Department, TV Gamer, 187 Oxford Street, London, W1R 1AJ*

This offer is only valid until December 30th 1984, unless stocks run out earlier.

Please allow 28 days for delivery, though we'll try to do better than that!

We will gladly exchange any cartridge or cassette that you have difficulty loading for another of the same title.

Total £

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

..... POSTCODE .....

Please send me the items I have marked.
I enclose a cheque/Postal Order for £.....

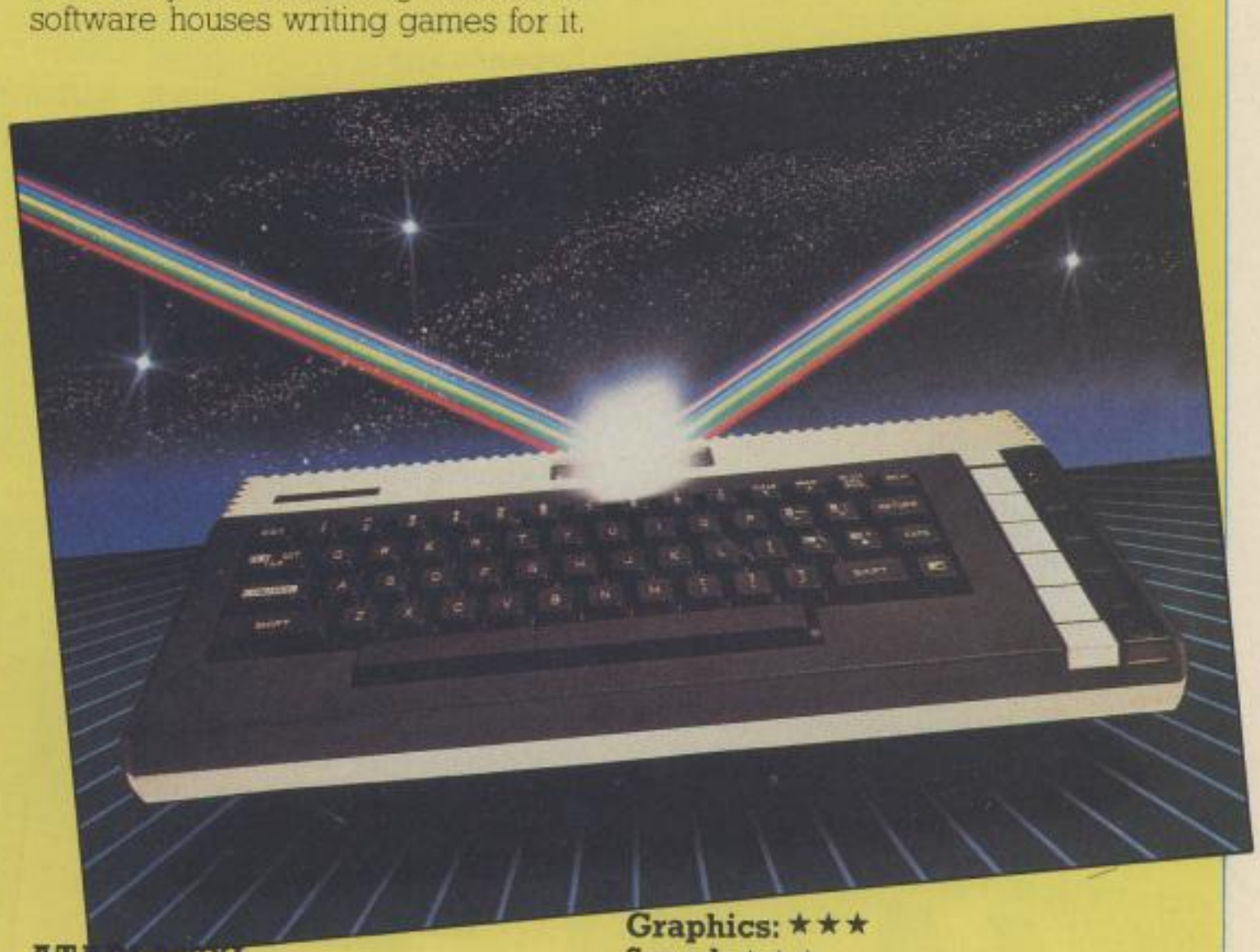
CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE

COVER STORY

Some of TVG's readers want a second computer for Christmas. Others have written in asking for help in choosing their first. With so many around, it can be difficult balancing price vs capability vs availability of games and peripherals. And you must be sure that the maker of your micro will still be here to help you in the next few years.

In this issue, the TVG team takes a new look at the most popular micros. We've sorted out our hardware to give you the latest prices, basic capabilities and potential, games available – and life expectancy. Graphics and sound for games are marked from one star (bad) to five star (great).

AMSTRAD CPC464
Price: £349 with colour monitor; £239 with black/white monitor. Rumour has it that prices will drop to £300 and £200 respectively.
Price includes: datassette and monitor
Interfaces for peripherals: joystick, user port
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 64K
Expandable: with disc drives
Program language: Basic, extended industry standard syntax
Graphics: ★★★★
Sound: ★★★
Games available: over 100
Life expectancy: The Amstrad comes as a complete package – not cheap, but you get your money's worth. Its future is guaranteed as it is part of a large electronics company with comprehensive distribution; its turnover last year was £85 million. Faith in this machine's future is confirmed by the increasing number of software houses writing games for it.



ATARI 800XL
Price: £169
Interfaces for peripherals: two joystick ports, user port (datassette, disc drive, printer), cartridge port. You must use a data, not a music, cassette recorder with this machine.
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 64K
Expandable: with disc drives
Program language: Atari Basic; other language cartridges available
Graphics: ★★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Games available: over 1,000
Life expectancy: After two very shaky years, Atari was bought by Commodore founder and ex-president Jack Tramiel. He offloaded the old dedicated-games machines to concentrate on the 800. He also reduced its price by £90, from £259 to £169.

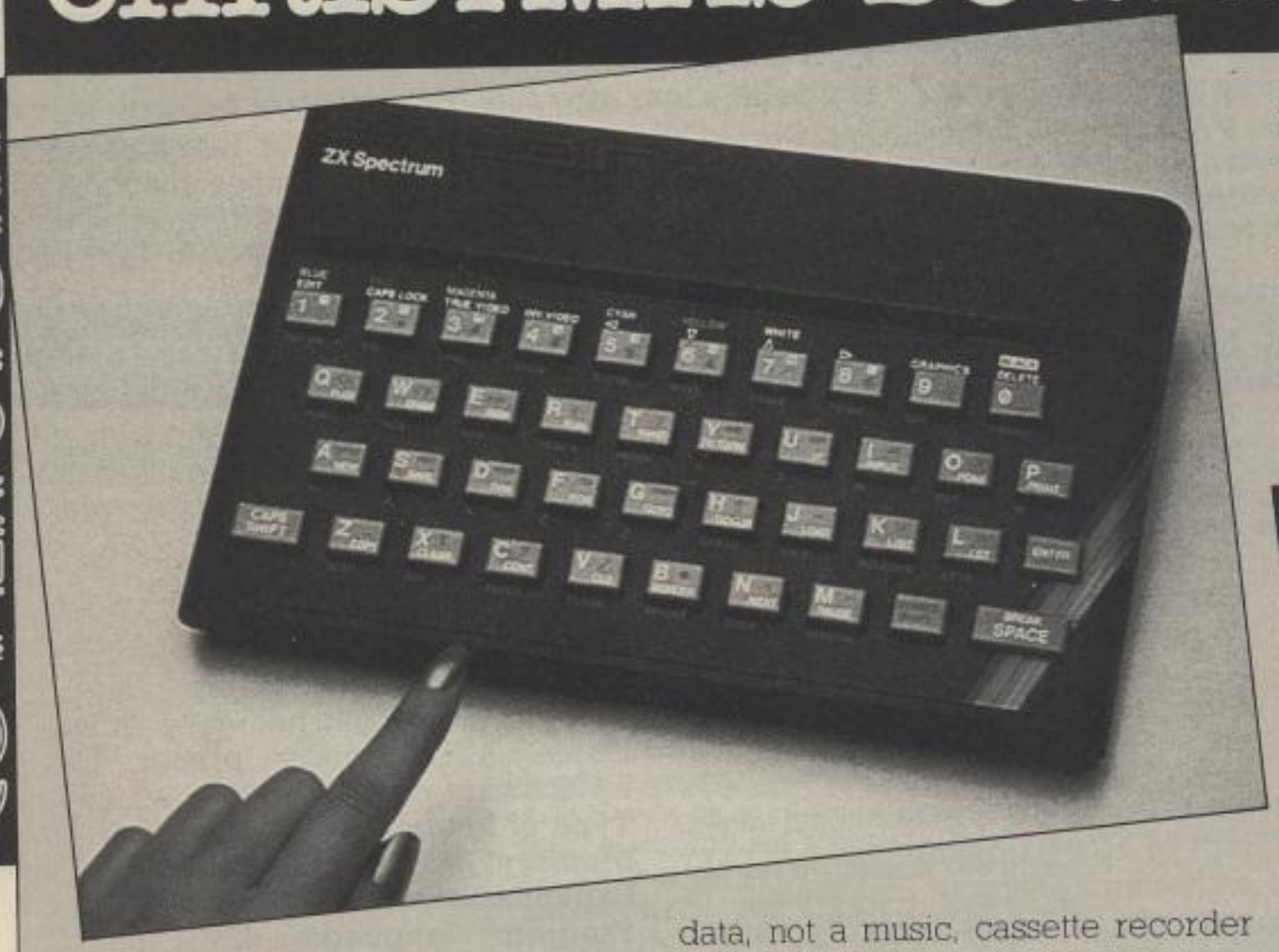
Faith in Tramiel's knack of making things successful is shown in the software houses who have taken the 800 back into their portfolios. And with so many games already in existence, you'll be old before you play your way through them.

BBC 'B'
Price: £399
Interfaces for peripherals: datassette, joystick, light pen, disc drive, Econet, MIDI, monitor, printer, TV; telesoftware compatible
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 32K
Expandable: with disc drives
Program language: BBC Basic; other language cassettes available
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Games available: over 500
Life expectancy: Grossly overpriced, the BBC is still one of the most expandable systems around. It has the potential to be one of the best games systems – but there are only one or two really good games for it: Elite and Zalaga spring to mind.

The reason you see so many around is that the BBC holds the official government contract to supply schools. But this contract ends in November of this year. Sinclair's Spectrum has often made a bid for this slot, but MSX is also a strong contender.

COVER STORY

CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE



SPECTRUM 48K
Price: £130
Price includes: six games if you buy before Christmas
Interfaces for peripherals: datassette, TV.
Type of keyboard: membrane
Memory: 48K
Expandable: indirectly to 256K
Program language: Sinclair Basic; other language cassettes available
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★
Games available: over 1,000
Life expectancy: The Spectrum, with the Commodore, is the biggest seller in the UK. It's cheap and a fairly good introduction to computing. At this price, and with so many high-quality games and peripherals, you can't lose.

The company has also launched the Spectrum+.

COMMODORE 64
Price: £190
Interfaces for peripherals: datassette, joystick, light pen, cartridge, monitor/TV, disc drive, printer; telesoftware compatible. You must use a data, not a music, cassette recorder with this micro.
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 64K
Expandable: with disc drive
Program language: Simon Basic; other language cassettes available
Graphics: ★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Games available: over 500
Life expectancy: The C64 with the Spectrum is the top seller in the UK, and one of the top three in the US. Its SID sound chip is the best on any micro. Regarded as the last word in sound and screen graphics, the C64's full potential is still to be seen.

DRAGON 32
Price: £159 officially, but can be bought new for £70
Interfaces for peripherals: cartridge, datassette, joystick, disc drive, monitor/TV, printer
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 32K
Expandable: to 64K
Program language: Dragon Basic
Graphics: ★★
Sound: ★
Games available: over 70, mostly through mail order

ELECTRON
Price: £199
Interfaces for peripherals: datassette, monitor/TV
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 32K
Expandable: no
Program language: BBC Basic
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Games available: over 50
Life expectancy: This is basically a cheaper and downgraded version of the BBC by the same manufacturer. It, too, is overpriced. It hasn't proved as popular as expected, and has relatively few games.

MEMOTECH
Price: £280
Interfaces for peripherals: datassette, monitor/TV, disc drive and hard disc drive, printer, two joysticks
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 48K
Expandable: to 512K with disc drive
Program language:
Graphics: ★★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Games available: over 50
Life expectancy: This is a very low-profile company, but its micros have received critical acclaim. Software houses are gradually creating games for it.

Life expectancy: After a year of doubt about the Dragon's future, the company has been rescued by the Spanish government-backed Eurohard. Its future again looks rosy. The price dropped dramatically before this news – so if you've got a small budget, grab it.

CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE

MSX MICROS
Price: Canon V-20 £280; JVC HC-7 £279; Mitsubishi ML-F80 £299; Sanyo MCP100 £299.95; Sony HB-75B £299; Toshiba HX-10 £279.95
Interfaces for peripherals: datassette, joystick, cartridge, monitor; some makes with printer
Type of keyboard: full stroke
Memory: 64K
Expandable: to 80K, and with disc drives
Program language: Microsoft Basic Extended
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Games available: over 50 (more to come)
Life expectancy: MSX micros could make more impact on home computing than any other. Until now, games and peripherals for one make of micro wouldn't work on another. So gamers had to fork out extra cash. Also, programs for the same game obviously differed from machine to machine. Converting the programs led to much frustration and hassle.

MSX could mark an end to this. It standardises both the basic hardware and the software.

MSX stands for Microsoft Basic eXtended – a program language developed in the US and extended by a group of Japanese manufacturers. About fifteen to twenty companies will manufacture the machine. Choose any one. Games, peripherals and programs for all can be mixed and matched.

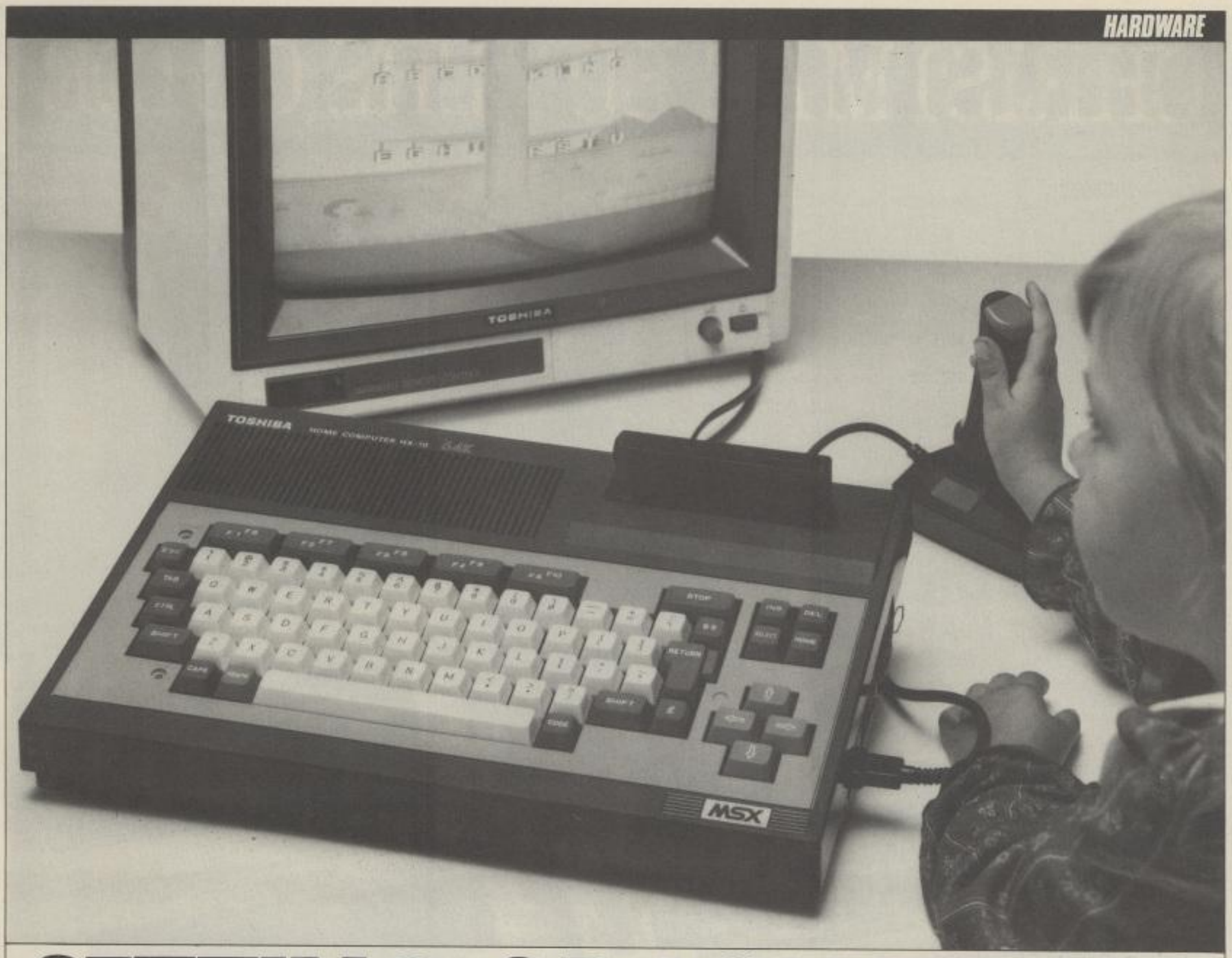
The companies backing MSX are international household names: Brother, Canon, Fujitsu, Hitachi, JVC, Matsushita, Mitsubishi, NEC, Pioneer, Sanyo, Sony, Toshiba, and Yamaha are some.

The theory is obviously sound. But this isn't a perfect world. The Z80 processor used by MSX machines is outdated and restricting for future developments. This basically means that it will be very hard for MSX machines to compete with the next generation of computers. But look what programmers managed to get out of the supposedly primitive Spectrum – and the even more primitive Atari VCS. Both continued to surprise gamers with increasingly complex games.

Below are some of the MSX machines destined for the UK. Clockwise from the top left, are offerings from Sony, Sanyo, Canon, Toshiba, Hitachi, JVC and Misubishi. Note the family resemblance.

Obviously, established games micro manufacturers such as Sinclair and Acorn won't give MSX their blessing. But the might and organisation of the companies backing MSX, and the basic desire for standardisation, means this is no here today/gone tomorrow system promising you the Earth and giving you only the topsoil.□

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!



SETTING OR LOWERING THE STANDARD?

Darrin Williamson looks at Toshiba's HX-10, one of the first MSX machines to hit the UK market.

Unless you've been in an Outer Mongolian POW camp for the last few months, you can't fail to have seen all the fuss about the MSX (MicroSoft eXtended) range of home micros to come from Japan. There are a lot of pros and cons about this operating system. These have been done to death in the mass media. So let's concentrate instead on the machines, and how they stand up to the competition in the home micro marketplace.

There are a large number of manufacturers from several countries - not just Japan - producing home micros to MSX standards. All are basically the same, but each has some kind of speciality. This could be a built-in add on: for instance, the Sanyo model comes with a light pen attachment, and the Yamaha is MIDI equipped, has a full range of synthesiser chips and an additional piano-style four-octave keyboard.

The other difference is price. Currently, the cheapest MSX is the Goldcrest at £199.

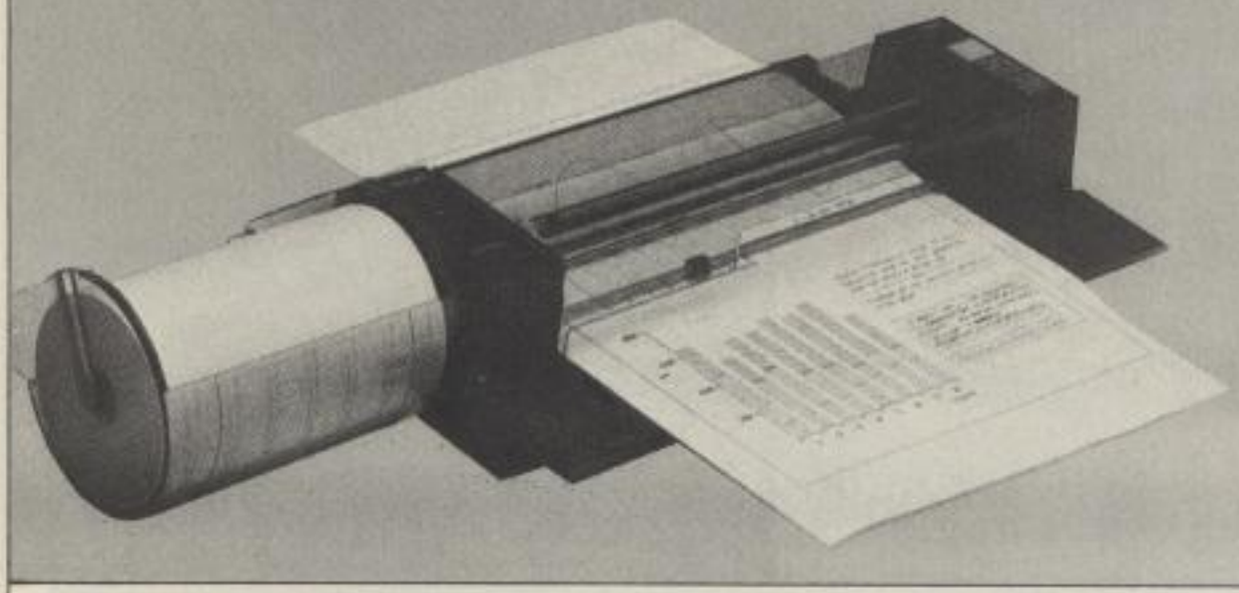
The unique feature of the Toshiba HX-10 is its audio out socket. This allows you to plug your micro into a standard hi-fi or ghetto blaster. So you get better quality sound than you would out of a TV sound system.

I suppose the idea is that, when you rush down to the shop with 250 notes in your hot little hand, the shopkeeper will smile gleefully and sell you a Toshiba hi-fi at the same time!

Let's take a closer look at the HX-10 and see what it offers. The first thing to hit you is the keyboard. It has seventy-three keys to its full-stroke keyboard, which is nice and responsive. As well as all the keys for the alpha numeric functions, there are four user-definable function keys and a very nicely laid out cursor key arrangement. This feature is common to most MSX machines.

One criticism I would make is that the keyboard is just slightly too small for my big paws.

As with micros like the C64 and the 800XL, the keyboard also acts as a graphic symbol generator. Sheets of stickers are provided so that you can stick the relevant symbol on the relevant key.



Input/output. Apart from the audio output, the HX-10 has a cartridge port for ROM games such as *Super Cobra* and *Track & Field*. It will also take utitlities such as synthesiser voicing programs.

A Centronics standard printer interface allows you to connect just about any printer to your micro. Toshiba does make some of its own.

There are also two expansion ports which are a bit of a mystery at present.

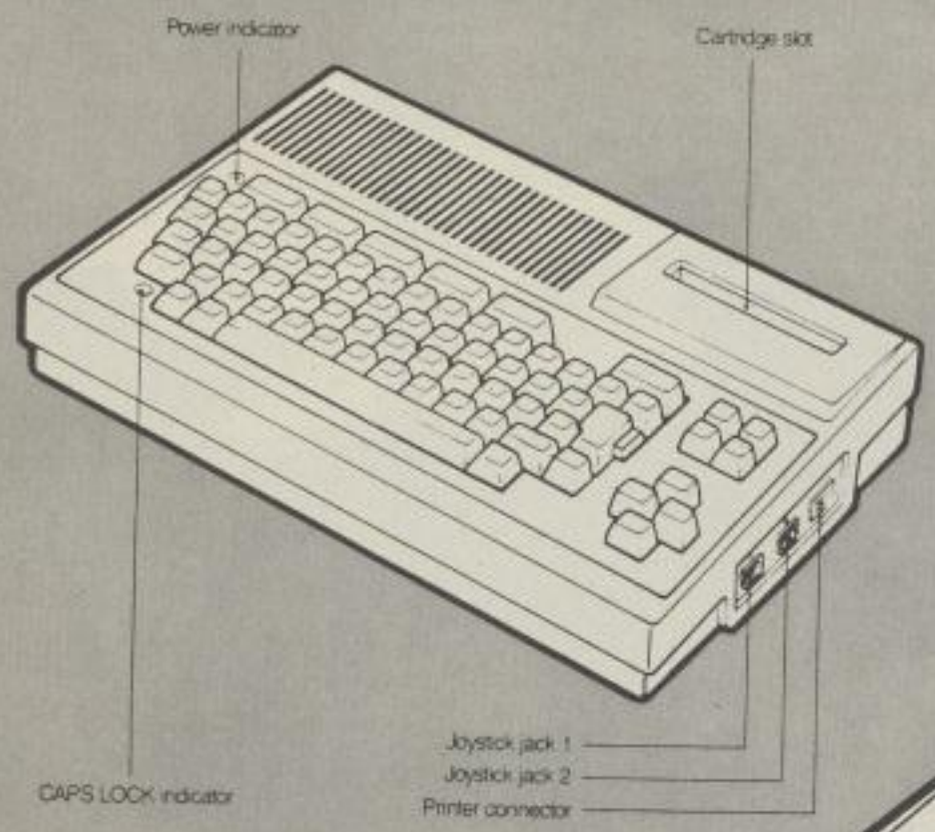
Last, but not least, there are two Atari-style joystick ports which will take all joysticks that will run on an Atari or Commodore computer. I must give a word of warning here. During testing, we discovered that pressing both fire buttons at the same time on an Atari super action controller effectively resets the computer. So whatever program was running - unless it was on ROM, of course - was erased. This may well happen with all joysticks that use two buttons for firing.

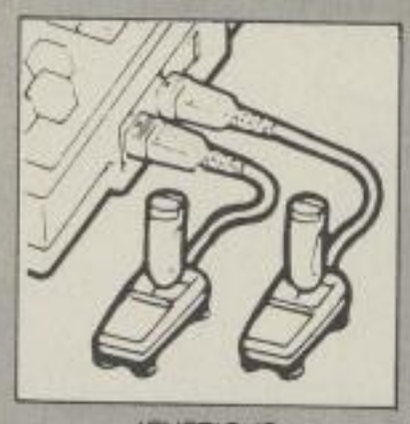
Expansion possibilities are quite good, as any peripherals made for one MSX machine automatically work on any other one. And all companies concerned have pledged that anything nonstandard that they include on their machine will be brought out to work on all the others. So theoretically there will be a light pen add on from Sanyo, a Yamaha music package and a video still frame grabber from JVC.

Software is a little slow coming. But I feel sure that we'll see as much software for MSX as we have for, say, the Commodore 64 in a fraction of the time. Already, many of the established companies in software development have committed themselves to the production of MSX titles in the future. And even now we are seeing stuff from arcade giant Konami with Rom versions of *Track & Field, Super Cobra*, and *Circus Charlie*. The chances are that, as Konami launches a new game in the arcade, it will bring out an MSX version. This can only be a good thing for gamers.

Conclusions. Without a doubt, MSX is going places. Whatever anyone says, it's going to do well. The Japanese marketing behind MSX is well thought out. After all, it would be difficult to go wrong when you've got the marketing might of the most successful electronics companies in the world.

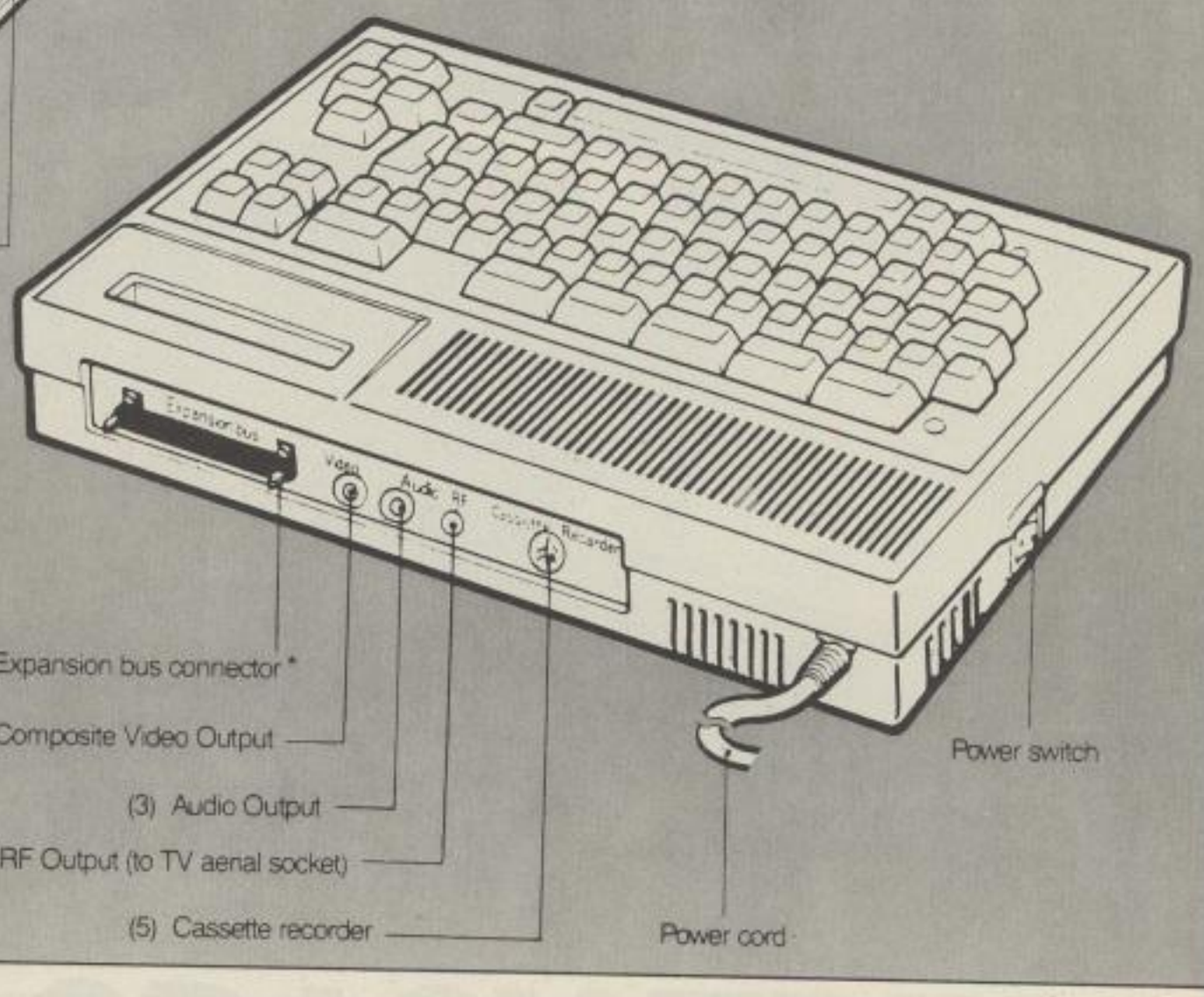
The compatibility feature will ap-




JOYSTICKS

PRINTER

DISK DRIVE



MSX BASIC COMMANDS

AUTO
CONT
DELETE
LIST
LLIST
NEW
RENUM
RUN
TRON/TROFF
CLEAR
DATA
DIM
DEFINT
DEFSNG
DEFDBL
DEFSTR
DEF FN
DEFUSR
ERASE
END
ERROR
FOR TO
GOSUB
GOTO
IF GOTO
INPUT
LINE INPUT
LET
LPRINT
LPRINT USING
MID$
ON ERROR GOTO
ON GOTO
ON GOSUB
POKE
PRINT
PRINT USING
READ
REM
RESTORE
RESUME
RESUME 0
RESUME NEXT
RESUME
(line number)
STOP
SWAP
NEXT
RETURN
IF THEN

peal to most people, as will the well-known names involved - Sony, Hitachi, Panasonic, Canon.

The use of the Z80A CPU has been widely criticised by the mass media. But in all honesty, the chip is by no means as antique as the likes of Sir Clive Sinclair. After all, what processor does the Spectrum use?

The Toshiba HX-10 is a sound performer which should prove a reliable machine with the nearest thing to a guarantee of long usage. It is the heart of a good beginner's system whilst being flexible enough to keep up with the user's needs in the future.

My prediction is that MSX will be here for at least a couple of years, probably more, after which it will be replaced by MSX II. This may well be downwards compatible, like Atari's 7800 would have been.

The HX-10 provides the user with good, all round value for money, in relation to the length of time before you need to change your micro for a new one. It is particularly good as a Basic machine, and without a doubt the one to go for if you don't want the extra frills that some of the others offer (at a price). You can always buy the extras as extras at a later date. In short, you could do far worse than the Toshiba HX-10.

Read the page opposite for an opportunity to win one for yourself.

MSX MACHINES HAVE BEEN LENT TO THESE SOFTWARE HOUSES TO DEVELOP GAMES

ASK JVC 01 874 6046
Ampalsoft Hitachi 056 5893563
Andromeda Sony 01 203 6366
Anirog Sanyo 02934 6083
Artic Mitsubishi 0401 43553
Bourne Educational Hitachi 0794 52330
Bubble Bus JVC 0732 355962
Bug-Byte Hitachi 051 7097071
CDS Misubishi 0302 21134
CRL JVC 01 533 2910
DK Tronics Toshiba 0799 26350
English Software JVC 061 8351358
Fantasy Mitsubishi 0242 583661
Farmfax JVC 0264 810824
GST/Electric Software Toshiba 0954 81991
Hewson Hitachi 0235 832939
Hi-Soft Hitachi 0582 696421
ISP Marketing JVC 0202 21180
Intelligent Canon 01 636 7017
Ivan Berg Hitachi 01 328 3341/3
Joe The Lion Canon+Toshiba 059 366 5935
Kiltdale JVC 02425 25458
Kuma Sony - Canon 07357 4335
Kemp Mitsubishi 01 444 5499
Lion Micro Systems JVC 01 580 7383
Llamasoft Hitachi 07356 4478
Longman Publishing Teleton 0279 26721
Live Wire Toshiba 061 8244233
Lothlorian Toshiba 0625 876642
Mastertronic Hitachi 01 935 4944
Mirrorsoft Toshiba 01 822 3580
Micromega JVC 01 223 7672
Micro-Aid Toshiba 0209 831274
Mogul JVC 01 437 3156/7
Molimerx Toshiba 0424 223636
Micro Intel Toshiba 0273 205099
Mr Micro Canon 061 7282282
Nelson Filmscan Teleton 0932 246133
Norwood 04243 5840
Oasis Teleton 0934 419921
Ocean Hitachi 061 8329143/7049
Oundle Sound Suite Canon 0832 72127
Premier Sanyo 01 723 9408
Psion Sony 01 723 9408
PSS Sony 0203 667556
Quicksilva Sony 0703 81346
Richard Wilcox Toshiba 0422 611214
Salamander Hitachi 0273 771942
Soft-Tech Int. Sony 01 240 1422
Sulis Hitachi 0225 61929
Softshop Int. Sony 01 658 7060
Tasman Toshiba 0532 438301
Terminal Software Sony 061 7614321
Virgin Games Sanyo 01 221 7535

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Now's your chance to win one of the most talked-about computer systems: the TOSHIBA HX-10 64K MSX standard home computer, complete with a TOSHIBA 14" colour portable TV.

All you have to do is answer correctly ten simple "true or false" questions about TOSHIBA, MSX and television. Then give us a reason why you think MSX is a good idea. The most original reason (combined with the correct answers!) will win the HX-10 and the television.

The ten runners up will each receive a copy of the recently released book by KUMA on the ins and outs of the MSX system entitled STARTING WITH THE MSX. The book is about 140 pages in length and is highly user friendly.

QUESTIONS

1 MSX stands for MicroSoft eXtended.
2 Television tubes are measured diagonally from corner to corner.
3 The HX-10 keyboard has 76 keys.
4 UK television is broadcast on VHF.
5 The HX-10 has a four-octave sound chip.
6 NTSC stands for Never Twice the Same Colour.
7 Acornsoft will be producing MSX games.
8 The HX-10 has 37K of user RAM.
9 MSX machines utilise a Z80A CPU.
10 Toshiba UK is based in Milton Keynes.

Name .....

Address .....

..... **Postcode** .....

MSX is a good idea because .....

.....

1 TRUE/FALSE **2** TRUE/FALSE **3** TRUE/FALSE
4 TRUE/FALSE **5** TRUE/FALSE **6** TRUE/FALSE
7 TRUE/FALSE **8** TRUE/FALSE **9** TRUE/FALSE
10 TRUE/FALSE

PLEASE COMPLETE AND POST TO: DECEMBER COMPETITIONS, TV GAMER, 187 OXFORD STREET, LONDON W1R 1AJ

COMPETITION RULES

1. All entries received by the closing date, 7th January, will be examined; correct entries will be judged by representatives of both TV Gamer and Toshiba UK Ltd.

2. The prize will be awarded to the entrant who correctly answers the ten questions and, in the opinion of the judges, gives the most interesting and original reason why MSX is a good thing.

3. The prizewinner will be notified by post, and details will be published in a forthcoming issue of TV Gamer.

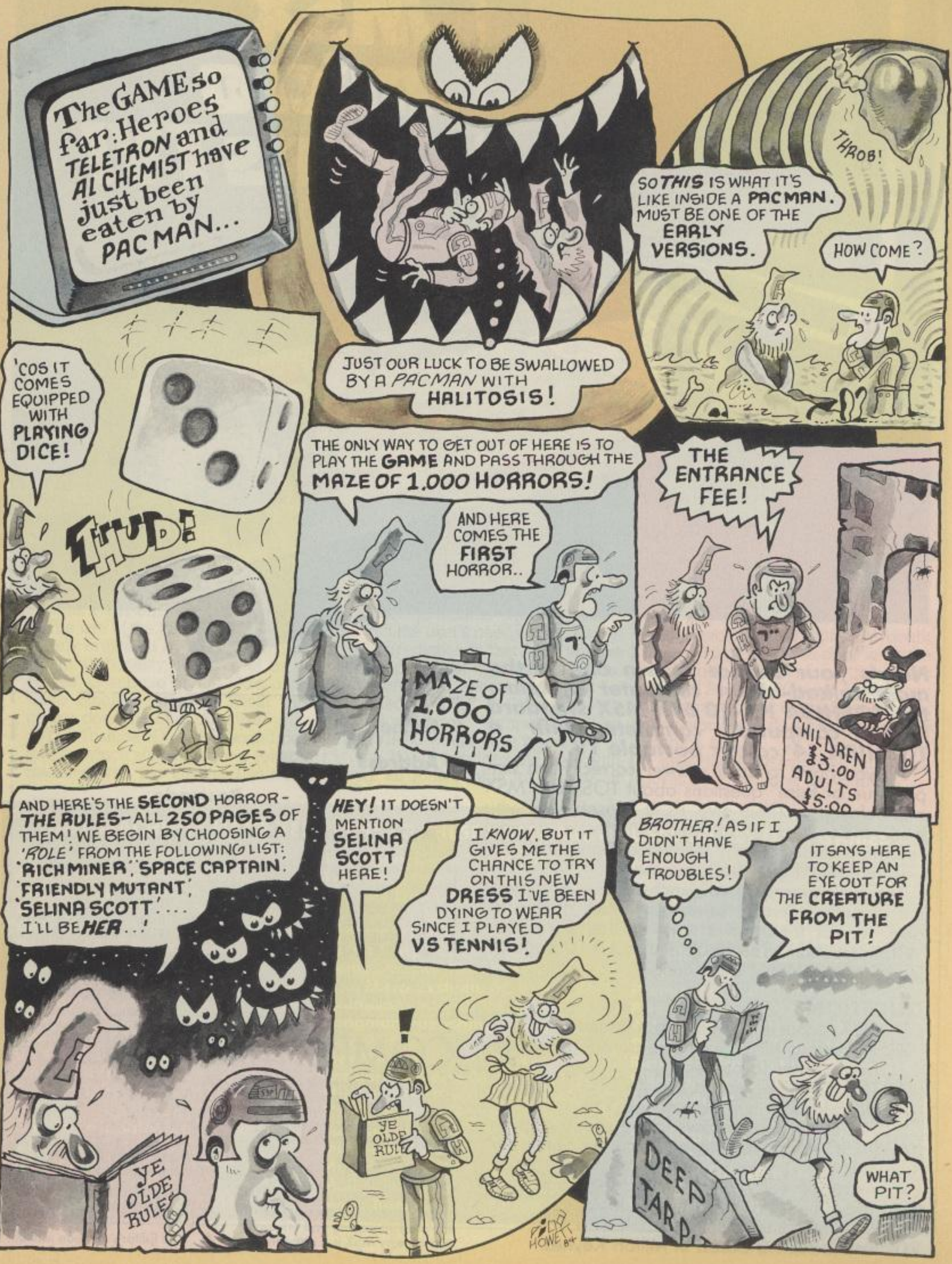
4. All entries must be made on forms cut from TV Gamer. Photocopies are not acceptable.

5. The prize is to British TV standards, and operation cannot be guaranteed overseas.

6. The Editor's decision is final.

HEROES INC

By Tim Quinn and Dicky Howett


The GAME so far: Heroes TELETRON and AL CHEMIST have just been eaten by PAC MAN...
JUST OUR LUCK TO BE SWALLOWED BY A PACMAN WITH HALITOSIS!
THROB!
SO THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE INSIDE A PACMAN. MUST BE ONE OF THE EARLY VERSIONS.
HOW COME?
'COS IT COMES EQUIPPED WITH PLAYING DICE!
THUD!
THE ONLY WAY TO GET OUT OF HERE IS TO PLAY THE GAME AND PASS THROUGH THE MAZE OF 1,000 HORRORS!
AND HERE COMES THE FIRST HORROR..
MAZE OF 1,000 HORRORS
THE ENTRANCE FEE!
CHILDREN $3.00 ADULTS $5.00
AND HERE'S THE SECOND HORROR - THE RULES - ALL 250 PAGES OF THEM! WE BEGIN BY CHOOSING A 'ROLE' FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST: 'RICH MINER', 'SPACE CAPTAIN', 'FRIENDLY MUTANT', 'SELINA SCOTT'.... I'LL BE HER...!
YE OLDE RULES
HEY! IT DOESN'T MENTION SELINA SCOTT HERE!
I KNOW, BUT IT GIVES ME THE CHANCE TO TRY ON THIS NEW DRESS I'VE BEEN DYING TO WEAR SINCE I PLAYED VS TENNIS!
!
YE OLDE RULES
BROTHER! AS IF I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLES!
IT SAYS HERE TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT!
Oooo
DEEP TAR PIT
WHAT PIT?
DICKY HOWETT

THAT PIT, STUPID!

OOOP!

GRRRT!

ACCORDING TO **BARBARA WOODHOUSE**, ALL CREATURES CAN BE **PACIFIED** IF YOU BLOW UP THEIR **NOSES**. SO HERE GOES....

PUFFFF...!

ER - I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS **AL**, BUT...

...THAT **WASN'T** IT'S NOSE YOU WERE BLOWING UP!

GRUT!

NOW YOU TELL ME!

Then

WELL, **HELLO** BIG BOYS!

THAT MUST BE THE DREADED **SEX BOMB** (EVEN WORSE THAN SMART BOMB). THE NEXT HORROR OF THE **MAZE!**

VA-VA-VOOOM! THAT'S **MY** KIND OF HORROR!

HOW CAN WE GET **PAST** HER...?

YE BOOK OF OLDE RULES

I'LL SEE IF BLOWING UP HER **NOSE** DOES ANY GOOD!

NO! KEEP BACK! WHY DO YOU THINK SHE'S CALLED SEX **BOMB**? A SINGLE *KISS* AND SHE **EXPLODES!!**

OOF! I USED TO BE LIKE THAT!

But..

GREAT **STARS!** LOOK WHAT'S COMING! *TEN THOUSAND* **MUTANT CAMELS**, A SQUADRON OF **EVIL AXMEN**, **5,000 STARSHIP BOMBERS**, **2,000 GIANT SCORPIONS**, **BONNIE LANGFORD**, THE WHOLE, **SIOUX NATION** AND **9,000 MR MEN!**

WE'VE **HAD IT...** UNLESS....

PHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE. THE **GATEKEEPER** WOULDN'T LET THEM **IN!**

THAT'LL SAVE THE ARTIST **DRAWING** THEM!

SORRY - **NO COACH PARTIES!**

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FROGGER, SUPER COBRA, EMPIRE STRIKES BACK,
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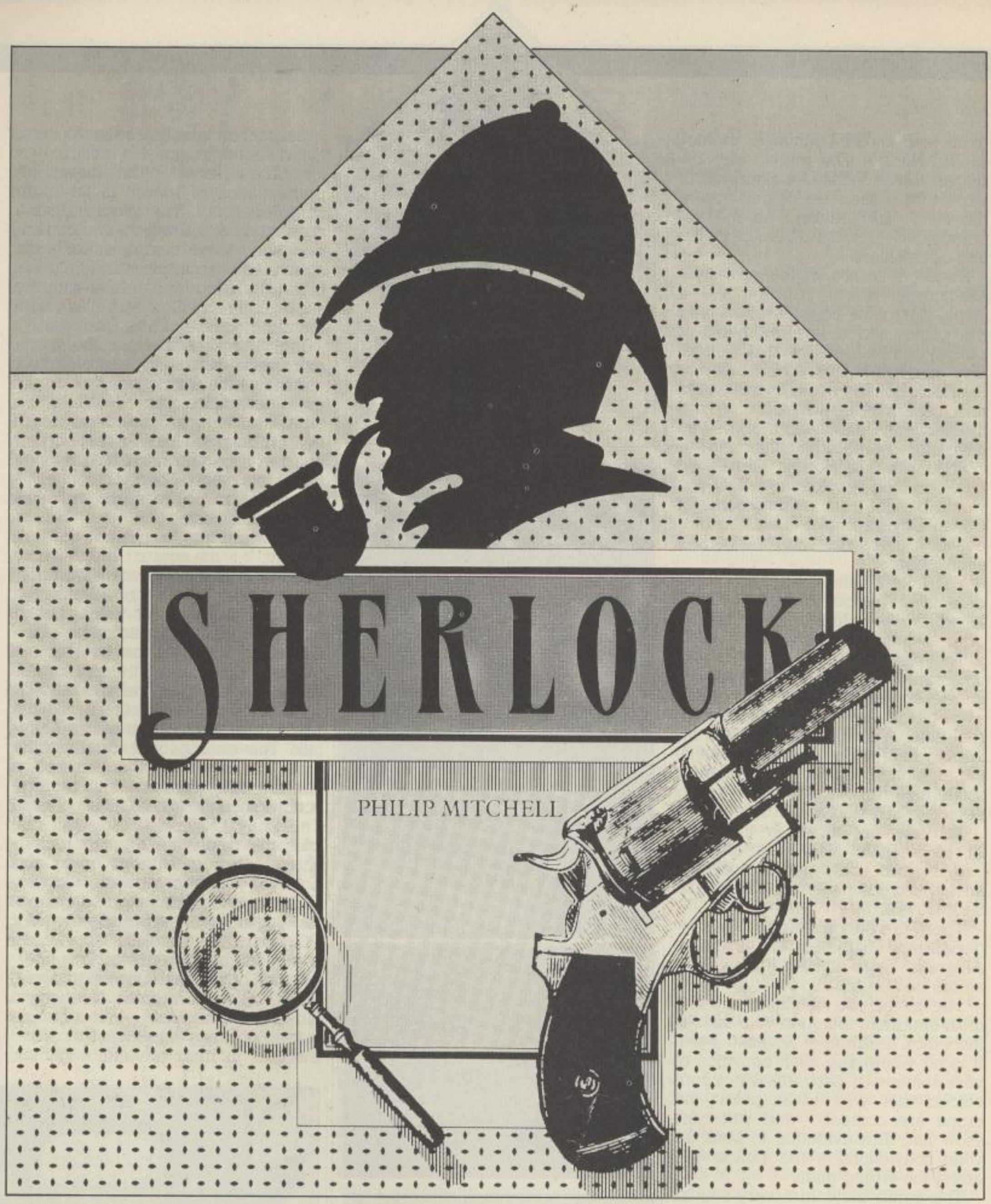


After releasing *The Hobbit*, Melbourne House had a high reputation to live up to. Its new adventure is even better. Mike Lewis gives you a head start.

The Hobbit adventure game brought Melbourne House to the attention of adventure games players all over the UK.

The game was original, high quality and innovative. The striking feature of *The Hobbit* was not only the high-resolution colour pictures used to display locations – a feature usually found only on the more expensive disc-based machines – but also the intelligent characters.

For the first time in a game, the player could interact with the characters, rather than just killing them. The characters had their own identities and whims. They acted independently from the player and between themselves.

To follow up *The Hobbit* was a difficult task. Initially, it was believed that Melbourne House would produce a similar *Lord of the Rings* trilogy – a logical step, as *The Hobbit* book precedes *LOTR*. Due to legal complications, this was not possible. So Melbourne House had to look elsewhere. It chose Sherlock Holmes.

The product – *Sherlock*, the adventure game – is the result of over fifteen months' programming from a

team lead by Phil Mitchell, creator of *The Hobbit*. The project also required the services of a Sherlockian expert for a year. He helped create the story, and advised on the accuracy of details about Sherlock's life and companions.

Sherlock comes in the new-style Melbourne House packaging – a large box with booklet explaining the game, and a few fragments of railway timetables for the period. The game is not based on any one Sherlock Holmes book, as this would ruin the aim of the adventure. What's the challenge in solving a crime you have already read the solution to?

So, unlike *The Hobbit*, there is no book in the packaging. But you would benefit from reading some of Conan Doyle's books about the detective. It helps you enter the game's atmosphere.

You take on the role of the great detective, Sherlock Holmes. You are faced by a complex and difficult crime, which must be solved.

The plot of the adventure covers the crime, and the clues to the true murderer. Just to make the game even harder, everything happens in real time. A clock on the screen informs you of the time and date, starting on Monday morning. So you must solve the crime before the wrong person is arrested and convicted.

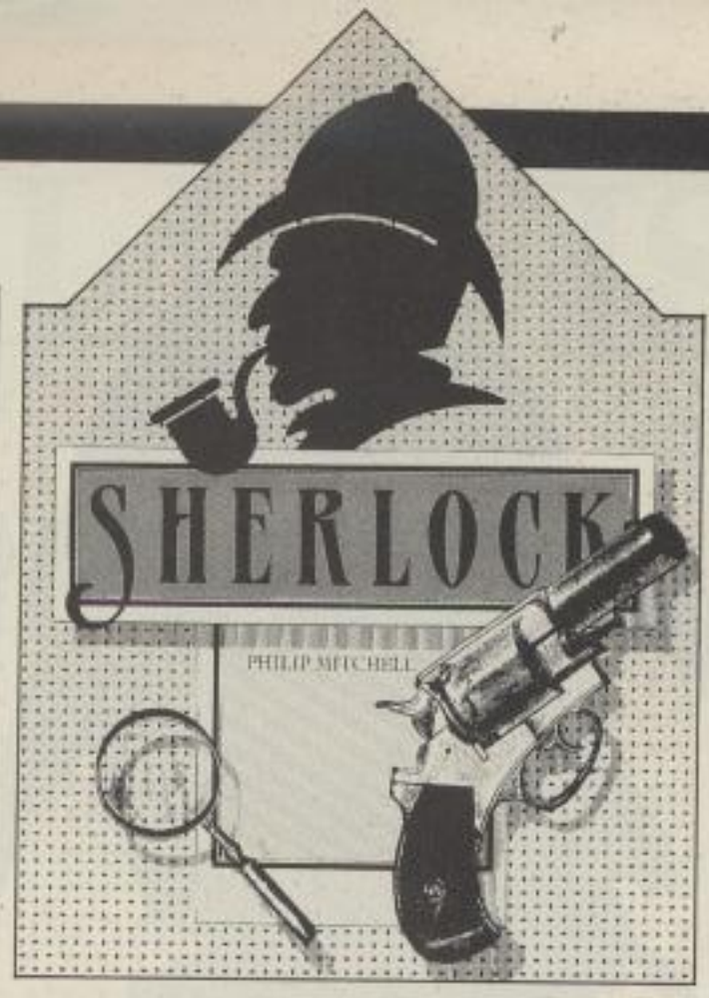
You are not alone in this task. There is faithful Dr Watson to assist you in your investigations, offering advice and comments on the clues so far uncovered.

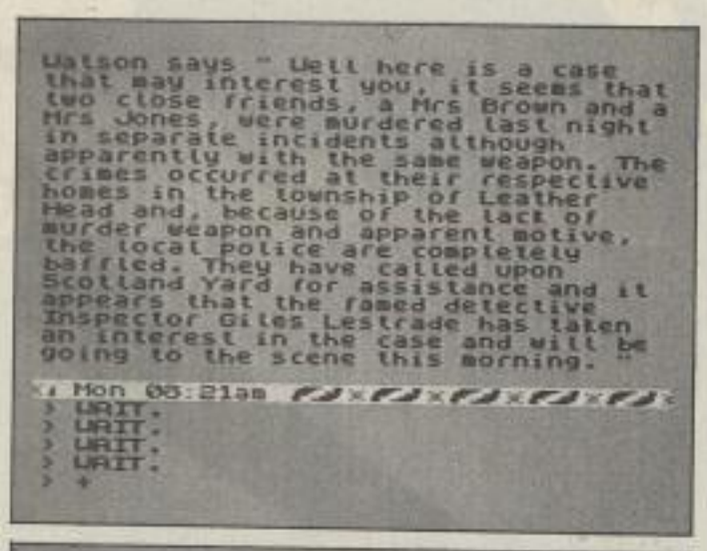
There are also numerous other independent characters in the game. All are far more active than the characters in *The Hobbit*.

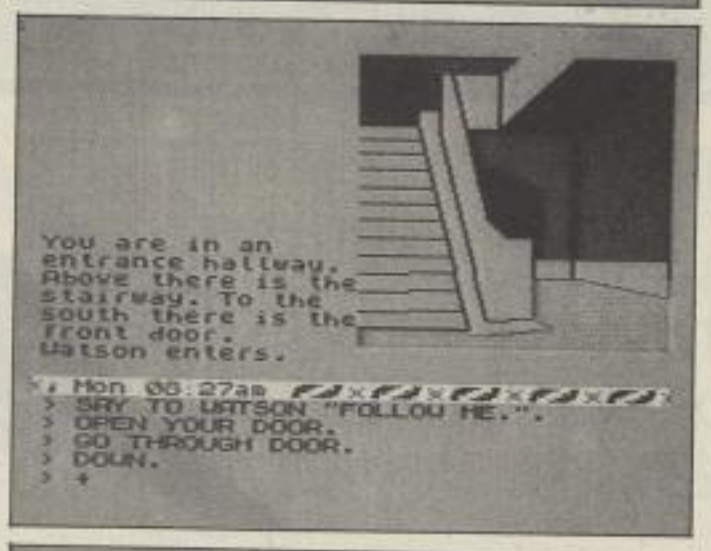
The major one of these, and the most important to you in your task, is Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard. It is he whom you must convince of your solution. If Lestrade is not convinced that your ideas about the crime are correct – and you can't show him firm evidence to back up your convictions – the police will arrest the wrong man.

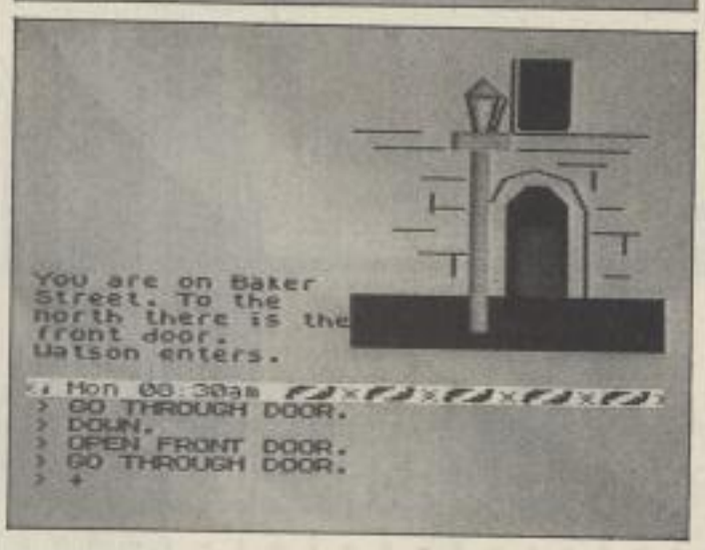
The game plays in a very similar way to *The Hobbit*. It has a split screen divided in the middle by the line giving the date and time. This is where your commands appear when you type them in, along with immediate error messages and prompts. The top screen window contains the descriptions of your location and your actions. This area also shows a small picture for several of the locations – roughly a quarter of the Spectrum screen in size.

The graphics were produced by Russell Comte, who was responsible for the graphics in *Mugsy*. They are more limited than in *The Hobbit*, but add an atmosphere to the game.




Watson says " Well here is a case that may interest you, it seems that two close friends, a Mrs Brown and a Mrs Jones, were murdered last night in separate incidents although apparently with the same weapon. The crimes occurred at their respective homes in the township of Leather Head and, because of the lack of murder weapon and apparent motive, the local police are completely baffled. They have called upon Scotland Yard for assistance and it appears that the famed detective Inspector Giles Lestrade has taken an interest in the case and will be going to the scene this morning. "
Mon 08:21am
> WAIT.
> WAIT.
> WAIT.
> WAIT.
> .


You are in an entrance hallway. Above there is the stairway. To the south there is the front door.
Watson enters.
Mon 08:27am
> SAY TO WATSON "FOLLOW ME.".
> OPEN YOUR DOOR.
> GO THROUGH DOOR.
> DOWN.
> .


You are on Baker Street. To the north there is the front door.
Watson enters.
Mon 08:30am
> GO THROUGH DOOR.
> DOWN.
> OPEN FRONT DOOR.
> GO THROUGH DOOR.
> .

SPECIFICATION

Name: Sherlock

Supplier: Melbourne House

Price: £15.00

Machine: Spectrum 48k
Commodore version soon

Rating: Value 4.5
Graphics 2
Sound N/A
Gameplay 4.5

Interaction takes place in the command language Inglish – first created for *The Hobbit*. The new implementation of Inglish is far more comprehensive. The program has a vocabulary of 800 words, and can understand very complex sentence structures. Examples might be: "open the window carefully with the stick" or "Fred killed Mrs Black with the gun because of Mrs Black's will".

Inglish makes playing the game extremely easy, and almost totally eliminates the frustrations found with usual adventure games. While the typical adventure game depends on the problem of finding the correct word in a certain context to add interest to a game, *Sherlock* contains a complete list of the verbs, adverbs and prepositions.

The word you use is not that important. It is the context and to whom you are talking, not where you are, that matters. The only problem is the tendency to forget that you are playing a game. I've typed in straightforward English in the heat of the moment! Fortunately, the error messages are very comprehensive.

As well as Inglish, there is what Melbourne House refers to as Animtalk. This enables you to talk to the other characters in the game. You can ask other characters to perform actions such as: "say to Watson 'read The Daily Chronicle'". You can discuss the case with the other characters, interrogate them, or try and put over your own views.

Once you start talking to a character, you do not need to use the SAY TO.. part; just enclose your commands in quotation marks. This interrogation of witnesses is vital to game.

The movement from location to location in *Sherlock* is not a simple matter of going east, west or whatever, as in most adventure games.

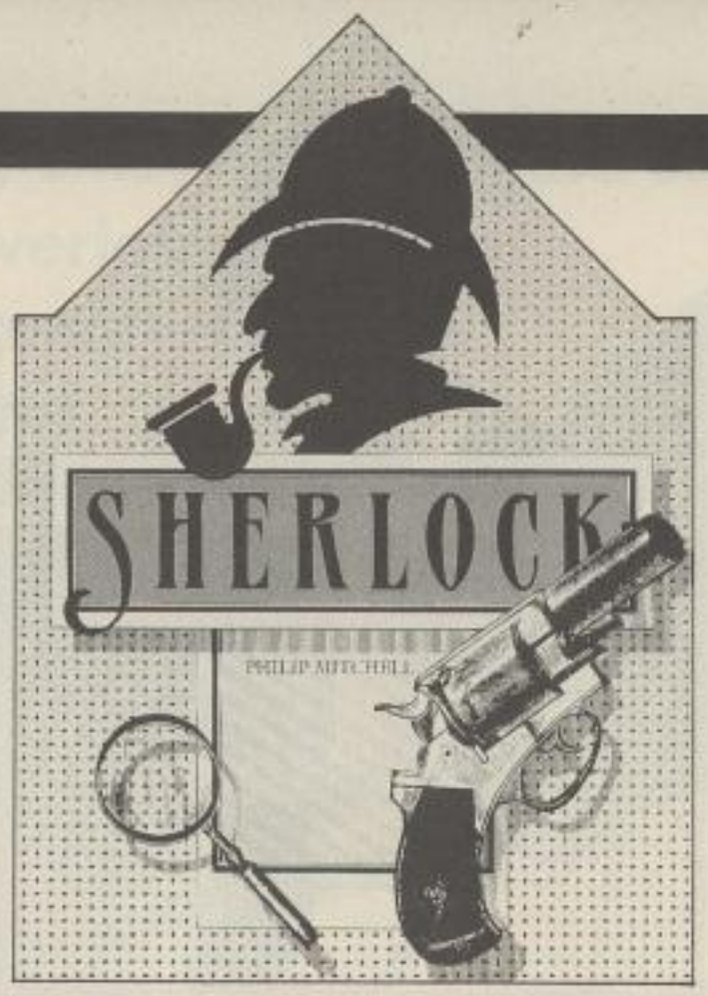
There is some movement like this, but most movements between streets in London are in a hansom cab.

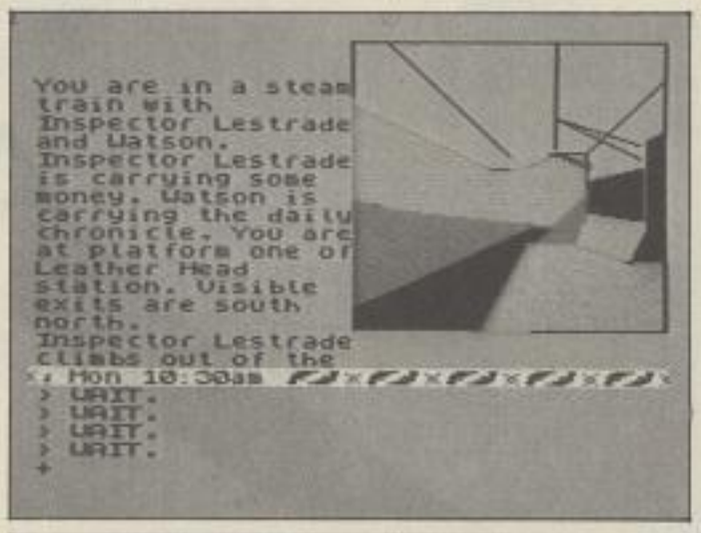
For travelling out of London, there are trains, or an underground system between four stations. As the game is in real time, the journeys take as long as they would in real life. Cab journeys take a few minutes – and train journeys over an hour. You can pass this time talking to fellow passengers about the case or clues. Or you can WAIT UNTIL a certain time. In this case, the real-time clock speeds up. If anything should happen while you are WAITing UNTIL, press ENTER to return to real time.

The fact that journeys do take such a long time eats even more into your time left to solve the case. If the case is wrapped up, and you fail to convince Lestrade in time that he has the wrong man, the game will end. You must start again.

Hints on play. *Sherlock* is unlike a normal adventure game. If you take a straight forward approach, you will fail to get near the solution. The major difference with *Sherlock* is the way in which the game varies each time you play, due to the characters' independence of action. This means that you must alter the characters' behaviour by ordering them to do things, or asking them and bribing them to help you.

If you try to solve the adventure on your own, without using the help available in the form of Watson, among others, you will run into a lot of problems. Because the game is real time, events take place simultaneously. Sometimes you will need to be in two places at once – this is where your helpers come in. They can tail people and report back, or investigate places for you. The police may also perform certain actions




You are in a steam train with Inspector Lestrade and Watson. Inspector Lestrade is carrying some money. Watson is carrying the daily Chronicle. You are at platform one of Leather Head station. Visible exits are south north. Inspector Lestrade climbs out of the
Mon 10:30am
> WAIT.
> WAIT.
> WAIT.
> WAIT.
+

You are at Browns Front Gate. Visible exits are south east. You can see a local police man. Watson enters.
Mon 10:46am
> SAY TO STRAKER "TAKE ME TO PHIPPS.
".
> S.
> U.
> +

You are in Daphnes Room. To the north there is daphnes door.
Watson enters.
Mon 11:04am
> S.
YOU CANNOT GO SOUTH.
> OPEN DAPHNES DOOR.
> GO THROUGH DAPHNES DOOR.
> +

which you could not without breaking the law. Sherlock Holmes was always careful to remain inside the letter of the law.

The real-time factor also makes mapping vital. You must move quickly from place to place, without wasting valuable minutes wandering around locations. Speed is especially vital if you wish to return to London, and the next train leaves in three minutes. Use the train timetables. They are accurate. There is nothing more frustrating than having to WAIT UNTIL the next train if you've just missed one.

The game starts in Holmes' library, with Watson sitting in an armchair opposite you, reading *The Daily Chronicle*. You should wait here until Watson has discovered the case you are to investigate in the paper. You cannot discuss facts which you are unaware of with the other characters. You will have to play through discovering facts before you can discuss them with Watson, or ask for explanations from Lestrade. While you are waiting for Watson to finish with the paper, get the oil lamp. It gets dark on these winter evenings. And in foggy London, you can't do anything without a light of your own.

All the doors in the game are identified with a description (in the same way that the goblins and trolls were in *The Hobbit*), such as plain, ornate, heavy, oak, etc.

If there is more than one door, you must describe what you are opening. In the initial location, there are two doors; behind the plain one there are two disguises. These should be used to get into places you cannot otherwise enter. Try wearing the old man's disguise. You'll discover that the program now changes its descriptions of events. Instead of it saying "you are sitting in your armchair. You see Watson", it will say "the old man is sitting in your armchair. The old man sees Watson".

This is a useful and neat method of reminding you that you are wearing a disguise. But Watson and Lestrade seem to see straight through them!

Once you are ready to head off to Leatherhead, where the murder you want to investigate has taken place, you should leave your house, and ask Watson to come with you. This will bring you into Baker Street.

This is typical of the London locations in the game, in that there is nowhere you can go on foot except into a building. The street exists as only one location. The solution is to go by hansom cab. HAIL a CAB, climb into it, and tell the driver to go to a certain location.

Now then, you want to go to Leatherhead. So you need to catch a train. Look at the fragments of train timetables supplied with the game: you can see that the train to Leatherhead goes from King's Cross. But you can't tell the driver to go to King's Cross – you must tell him to go to the road the station is on. In this case, the same information sheet shows it as King's Cross Road.

If you type WAIT a few times, the minutes will tick by and the hansom cab will draw up at King's Cross Road. Here you must pay the driver. You start with over £5. All monetary transactions are in the Victorian currency of pounds, shillings and pence. You can now enter the station and get a train.

There are four platforms. The first

two are Underground platforms, where you can catch trains to Aldergate, Paddington or Victoria stations. The third and fourth platforms are the Leatherhead line.

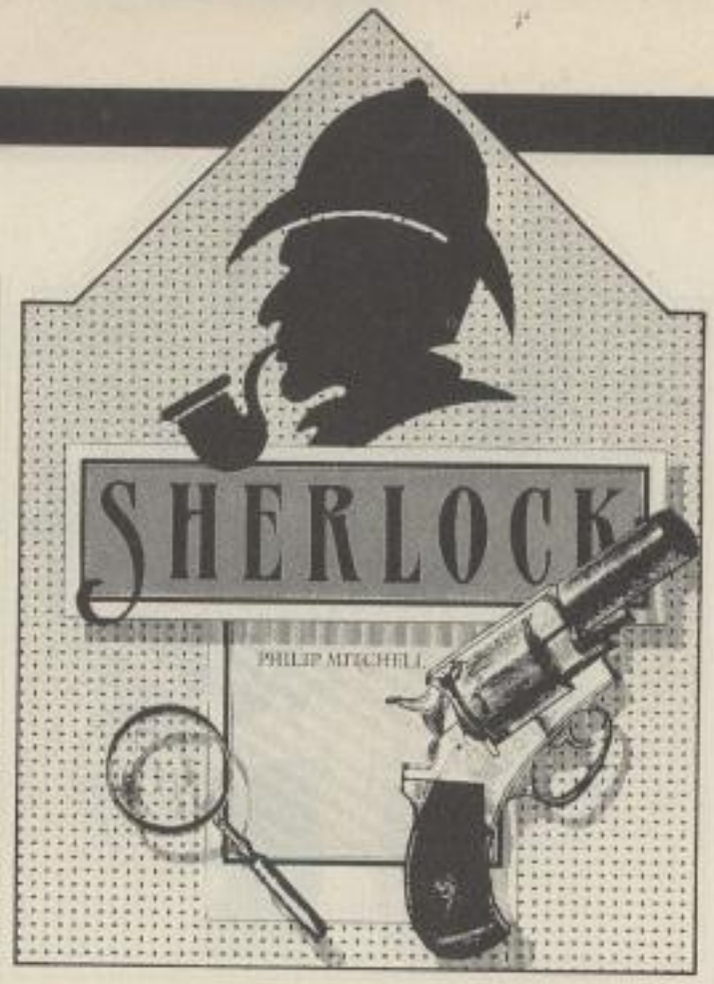
The platform you want is the first of these, platform three. Here you will discover Inspector Lestrade waiting for the 9.26 train. He'll say HELLO to you and Watson, and chat for a while. Then you can board the train together. It is important during the early stage of the game to stay with Lestrade. He can extract information from suspects who won't talk to you.

The other important person is Chief Constable Straker, whom you will meet at Leatherhead Station. You must be introduced to the Chief Constable by Lestrade. Otherwise, the local policemen in Leatherhead, who are guarding the scenes of the two crimes, will not let you past.

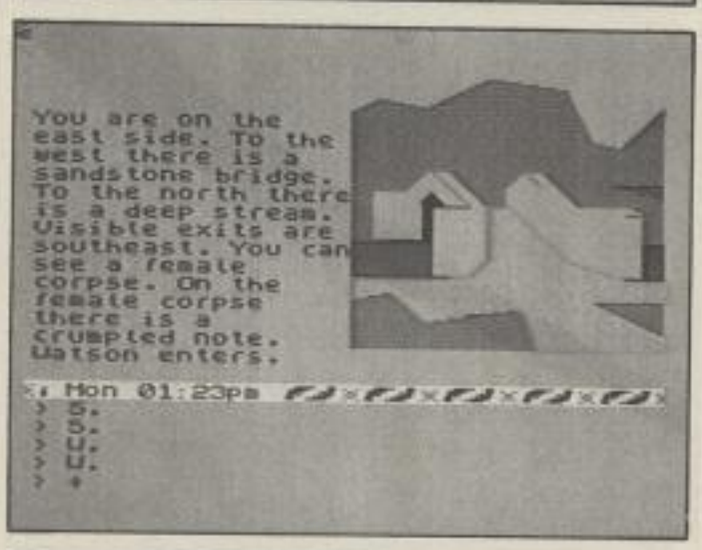
It is in Leatherhead that the first clues, as well as the suspects and witnesses, are scattered. They can be quizzed about their alibis, what they have seen – "tell me what happened" – and where they live. Gather all the alibis, and do some snooping of your own. You should come up with a prime suspect which differs from Lestrade's main man. This is where you can start investigating, and where knowing addresses comes in very handy.

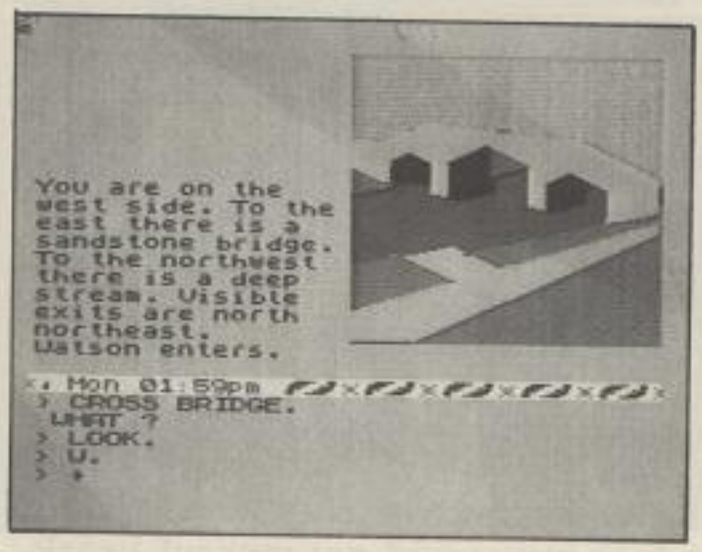
The only way to discover locations in London – which you visit by hansom cab – is by asking about addresses. You can also follow people in their cabs, and find out where they are going by eavesdropping on what they say to the cabbie.

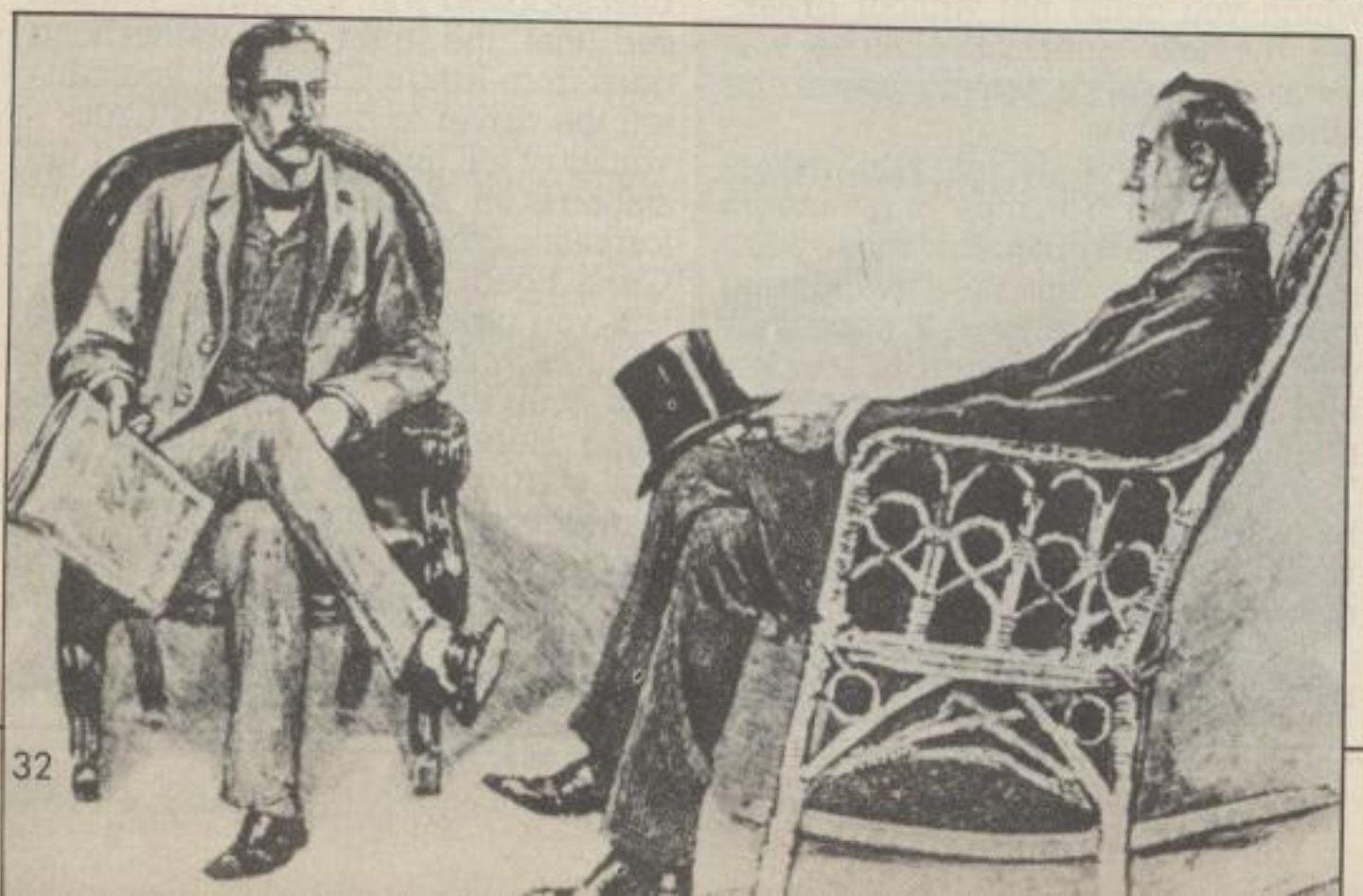
To interrogate suspects, you must phrase questions in a form which they will recognise and can answer – such as direct questions about people, places and events. Quite often, they will not answer you because they don't have that information. Sometimes it's because they aren't willing to talk to you. In that case, get help from the police. Getting them to ask the questions provides you with extra information.



You are in the browns library. To the west there is the thick heavy door.
Watson enters.
Mon 11:35am
I SEE NO DAILY CHRONICLE THAT YOU C
AN EXAMINE
> OPEN THICK HEAVY DOOR.
> GO THROUGH THICK HEAVY DOOR.
>


You are on the east side. To the west there is a sandstone bridge. To the north there is a deep stream. Visible exits are southeast. You can see a female corpse. On the female corpse there is a crumpled note.
Watson enters.
Mon 01:23pm
> S.
> S.
> U.
> U.
>


You are on the west side. To the east there is a sandstone bridge. To the northwest there is a deep stream. Visible exits are north northeast.
Watson enters.
Mon 01:59pm
> CROSS BRIDGE.
WHAT ?
> LOOK.
> U.
>



There are several ways to finish the game. Lestrade can tell you that the case has been wrapped up, and the police have arrested their man. You can be killed by an irate suspect – so avoid direct interference and invasion of privacy. Or you can persuade Lestrade of the guilt of your suspect and the innocence of his.

Persuading Lestrade is not easy. You should talk to him, and build up a logical argument by making statements about the characters involved. These are on the lines of

"X is guilty because. . ."
"Y is innocent because. . ."
"X's alibi is false because. . ."

It is not necessary to convince Lestrade of everything at once. He will consider statements for a while, then come back to you for more evidence after he has thought about them. All the characters will "think" about things you tell them, before arguing or agreeing with you.

Bugs. Just like *The Hobbit*, *Sherlock* is so complex that it cannot be guaranteed error free. There are a few strange bugs which don't interfere with play, such as opening doors from inside hansom cabs. One amusing situation occurs if you climb into Watson's armchair – when he climbs in with you.

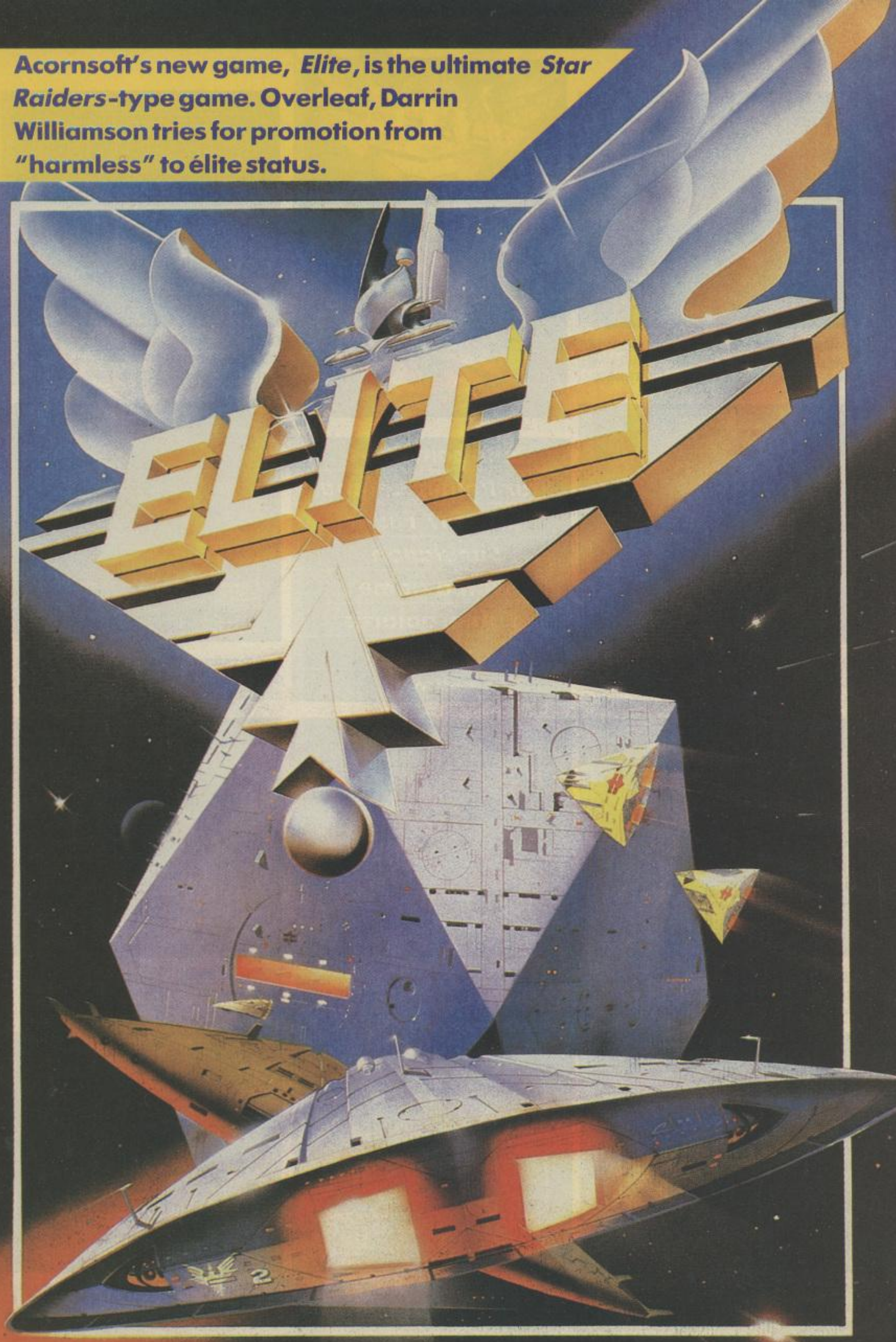
You would also be advised to save games at important sections. The program can run out of memory for the logical database. A sign of this about to occur is a slowing down of the response times.

You can see from the description of how to get started and the hints that *Sherlock* is not an easy game to solve. I haven't given a solution in detail, as that would spoil the adventure for anyone investigating it. Figuring out clues which have been staring you in the face is one of the delightful and frustrating aspects of *Sherlock*.

Author Phil Mitchell said he feels that *Sherlock* is the hardest adventure game available. I agree with him. *Sherlock* is very difficult, as you must divorce yourself from the usual style of adventure playing. You must develop interactive skills with the other characters in the game, and interpret clues and actions accurately. The solution won't come easily. But you'll feel greatly accomplished when you do finish. The game has a strong, addictive content – which is unusual for an adventure – as you try again and again to solve a certain clue or catch a certain suspect.

Sherlock is the state-of-the-art adventure. Melbourne House has again set the standard for others to match. If you have a Spectrum or a Commodore 64, Sherlock is an essential purchase. Even at £15 it is worth every penny. And there are few you can say that about. □

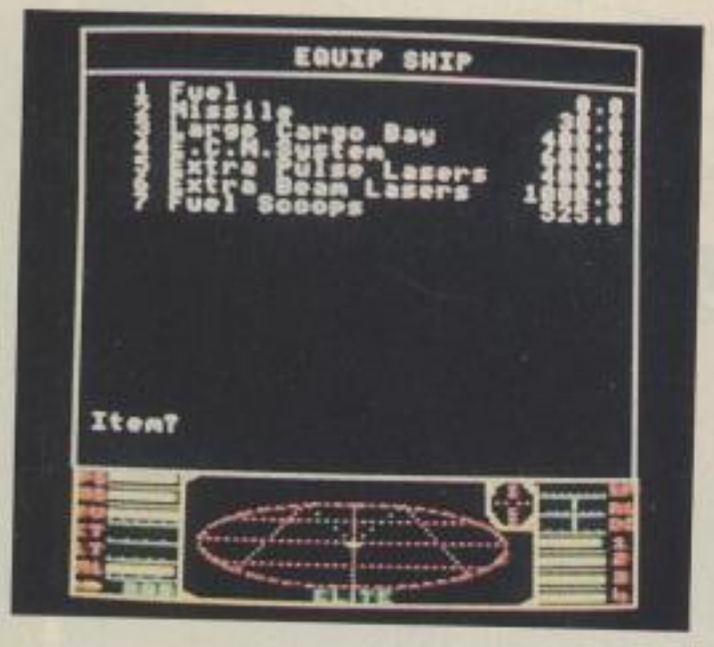
Acornsoft's new game, *Elite*, is the ultimate *Star Raiders*-type game. Overleaf, Darrin Williamson tries for promotion from "harmless" to élite status.



for the BBC Microcomputer

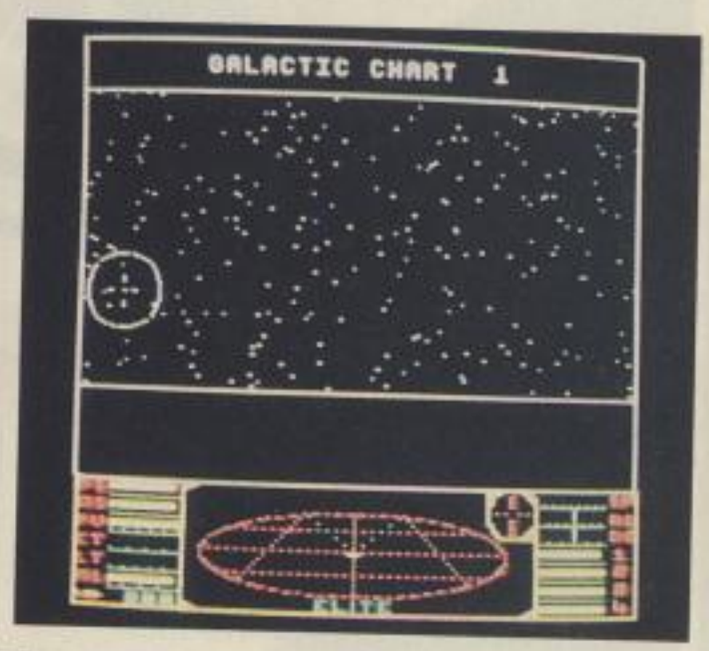
Initial status screen. This is how you begin your voyage – with 100 cash credits and a rating of harmless.

Lave market prices. These prices must be committed to memory so that you can compare systems.

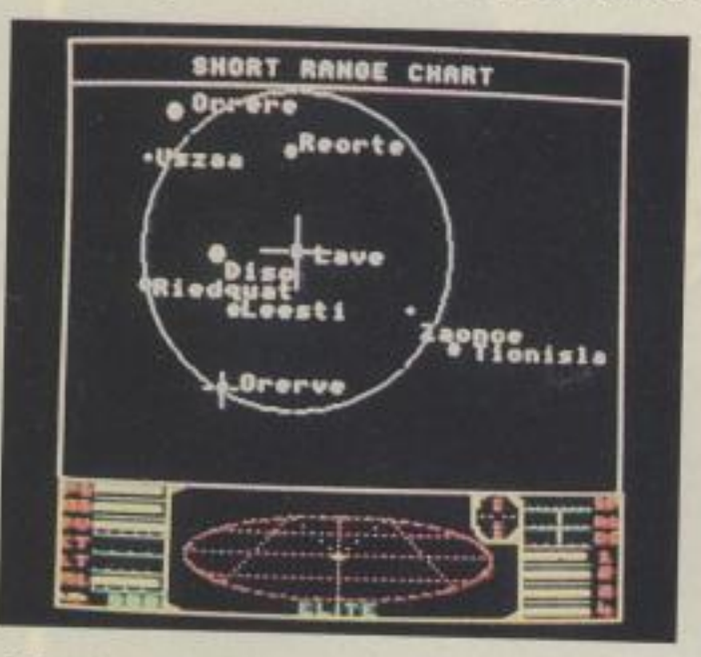


Ship equipment purchasing. Lave space station offers seven items to add to your Cobra Mark III freighter.

Elite combines *Star Raider Combat* and *747 Flight Simulation* with a game of intergalactic buying and selling

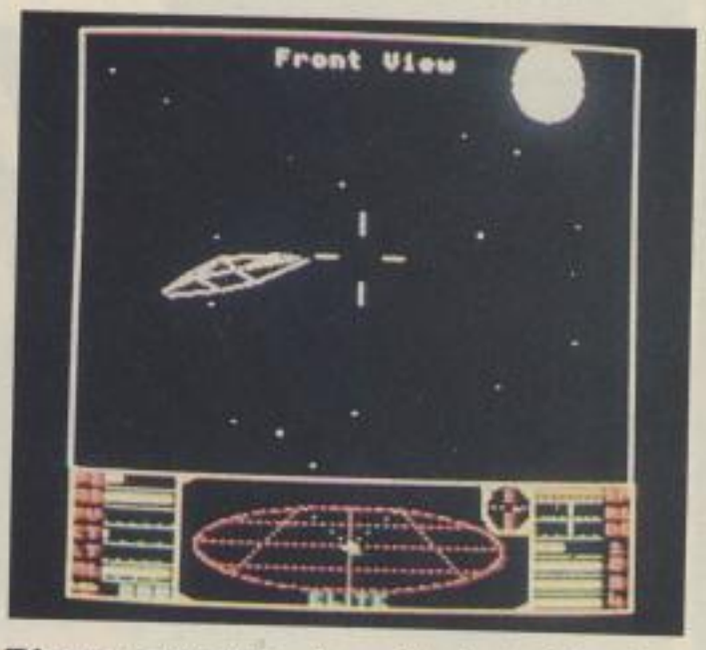


Long-range chart: one of twenty galaxies. The small cross shows position, the circle hyperspace range.



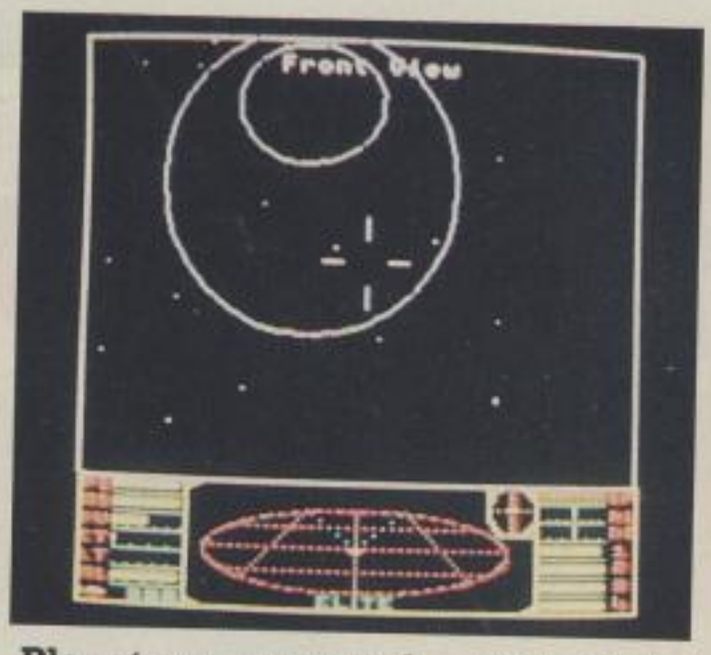
Short-range chart: a close-up of the local planet. The large cross shows position, the small one destination.

Into hyperspace. Once you select your destination, you hurtle through space at supralight speed.

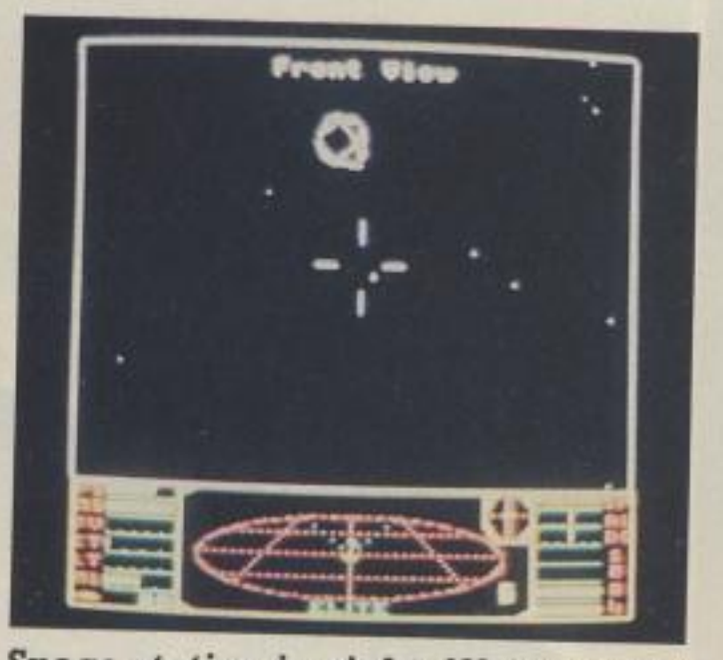


Pirate attack. An ultrafast Mamba pirate ship closes in for the kill as we emerge from hyperspace.

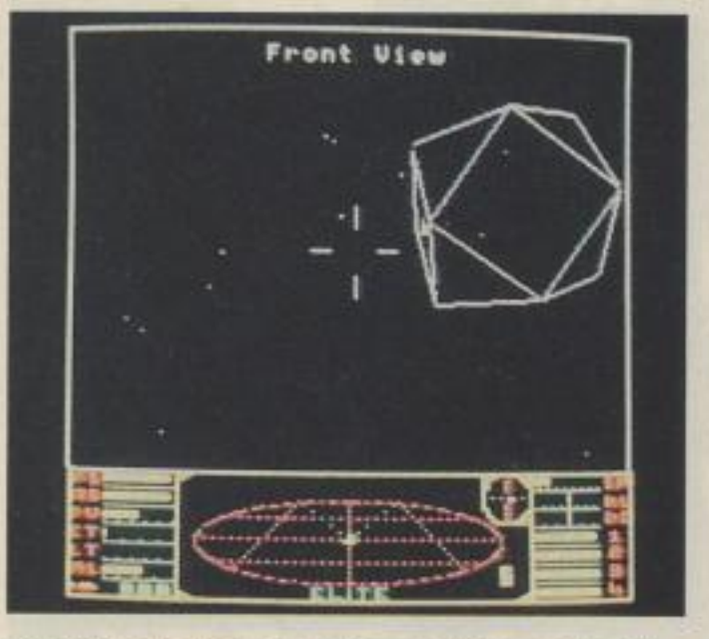
Victory! He didn't reckon on coming up against me. Our pirate is reduced to so many particles of space dust.



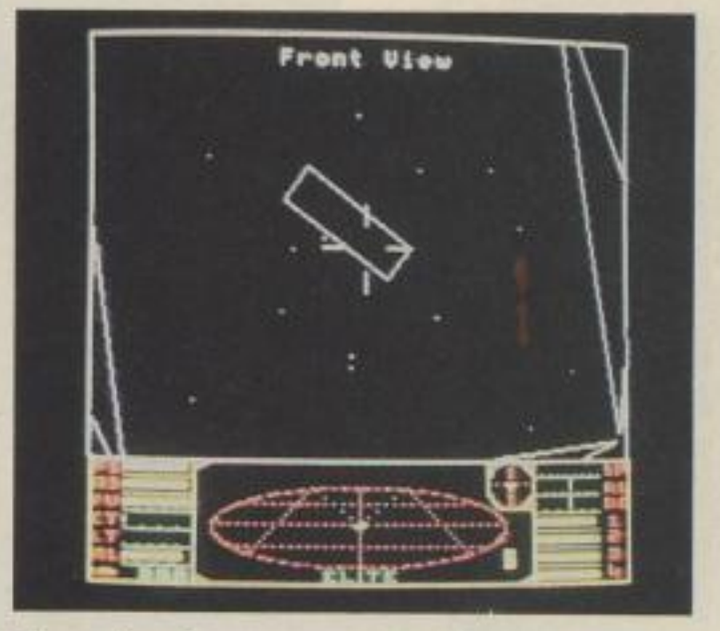
Planetary approach. Once you select your destination, you hurtle through space at supralight speed.



Space station in sight. We're now in the station's protective range, and immune to pirate and police attacks.



Getting closer. The station gets bigger as we come in fast. Time to reduce speed for final approach.

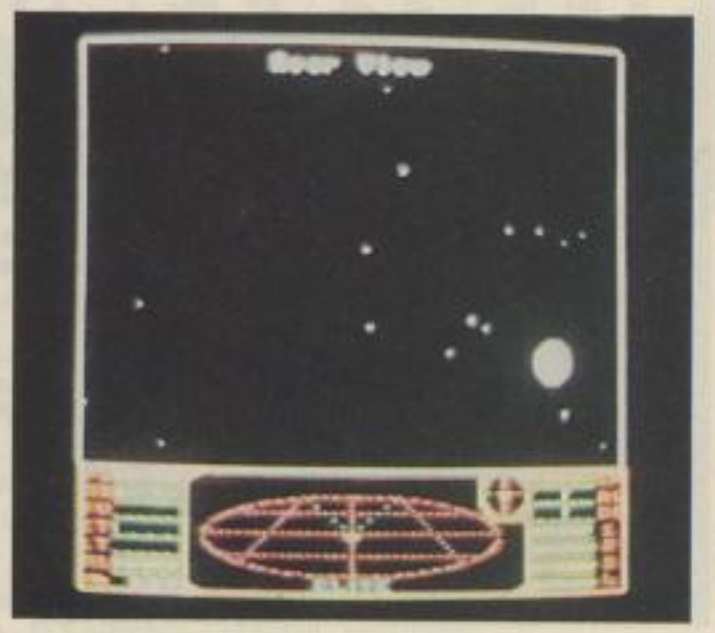


The final approach. Skilful precision flying is needed to negotiate the revolving porthole, *2001* style.

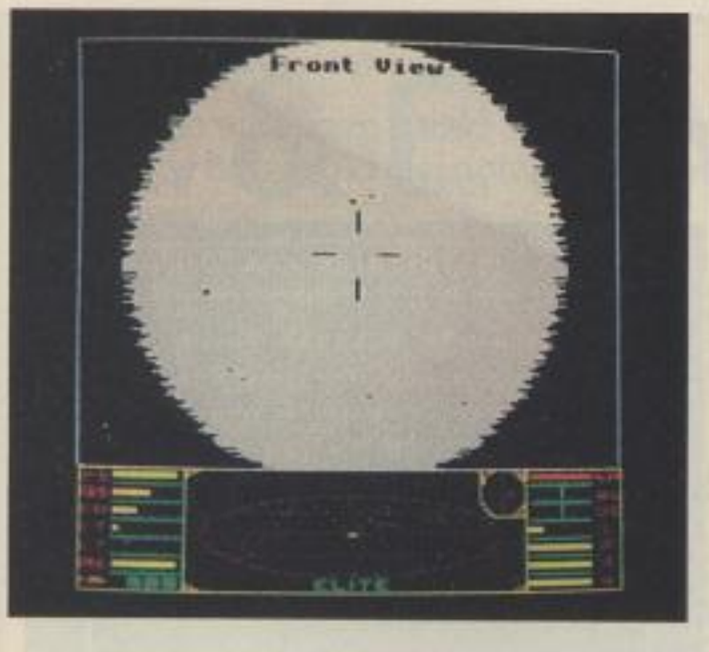
ORERVE MARKET PRICES
PRODUCT UNIT UNIT PRICE QUANTITY FOR SALE
Food t 5.2 12t
Textiles t 6.8 13t
Radioactives t 22.4 11t
Slaves t 3.1 1t
Liquor/Wines t 27.2 18t
Luxuries t 8.0 30t
Narcotics t 3.4 1t
Computers t 28.4 14t
Machinery t 54.0 22t
Alloys t 38.0 38t
Firearms t 5.2 -
Furs t 66.0 7t
Minerals t 11.6 56t
Gold kg 32.6 5kg
Platinum kg 72.4 13kg
Gem-Stones g 16.0 -
Alien Items t 39.2 -

Let the trading begin. Having successfully landed, we can trade with the human colonies.

Neil Raine, the programmer, has done a magnificent job in making this game a constant challenge even to battle-hardened Eliters.

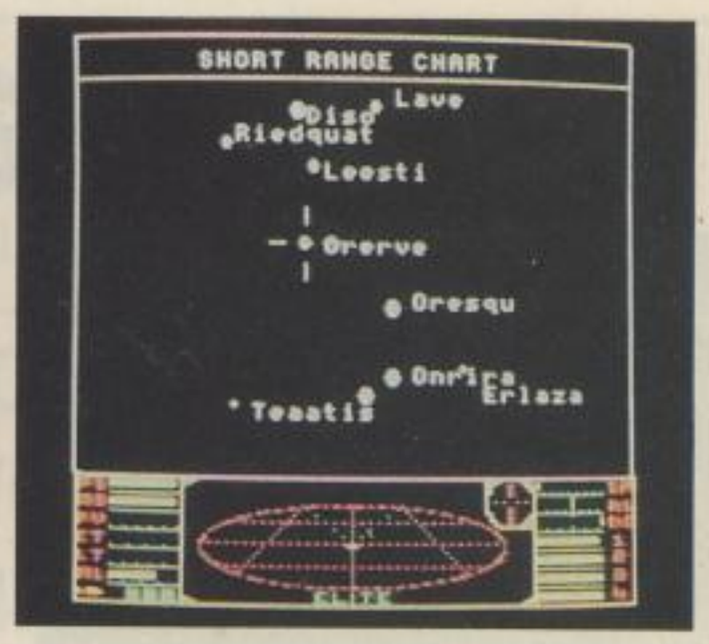


The next system. Fresh from a light jump, we approach a new planet. This is a view from the rear.

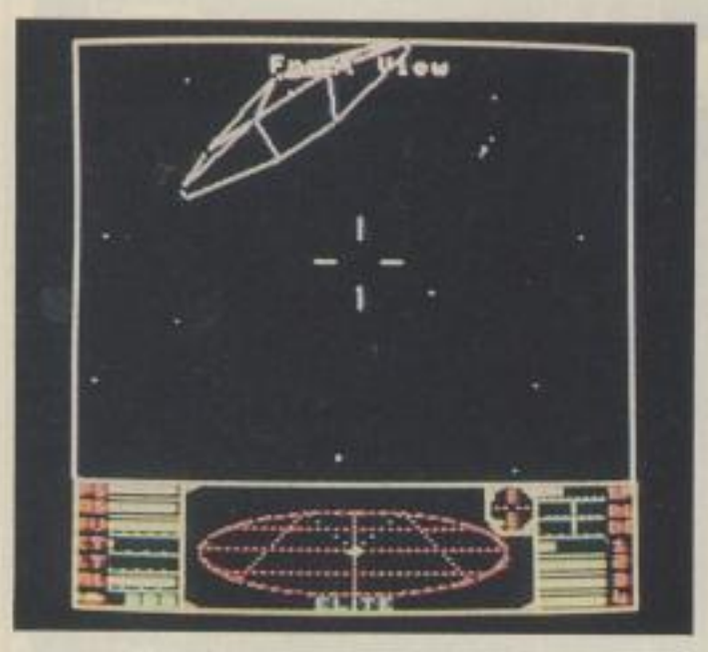


Things get hot. If you get too close to the sun, you'll increase cabin temperature and melt your vessel.

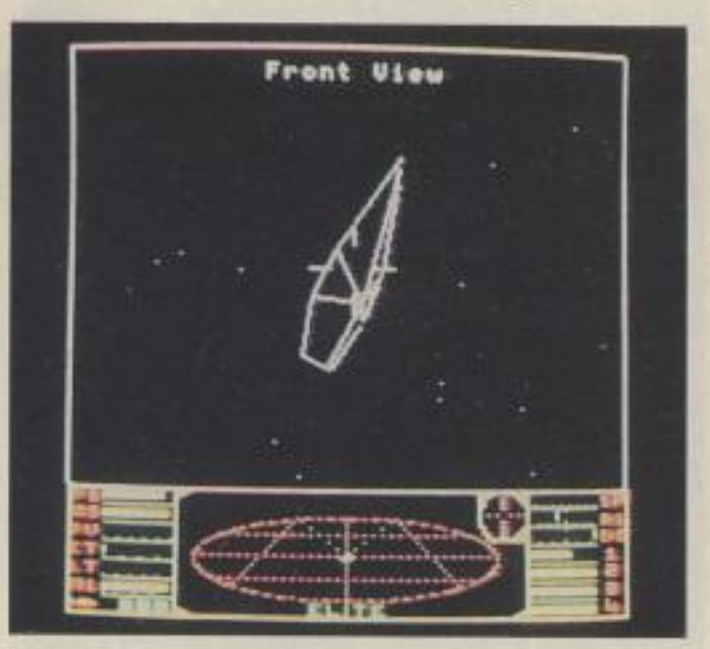
Back on course. We approach our second space station. Docking procedure is the same on all systems.



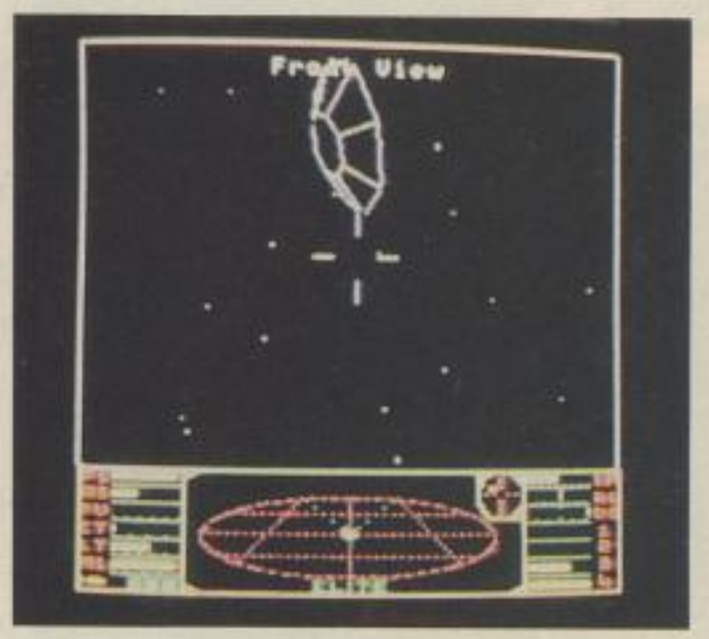
Orerve short-range chart. Having safely landed on Orerve, we consult the chart to see where next to go.



Out of the frying pan. . . Hyperspacing here was a bad move. This sector of space is riddled with pirates.

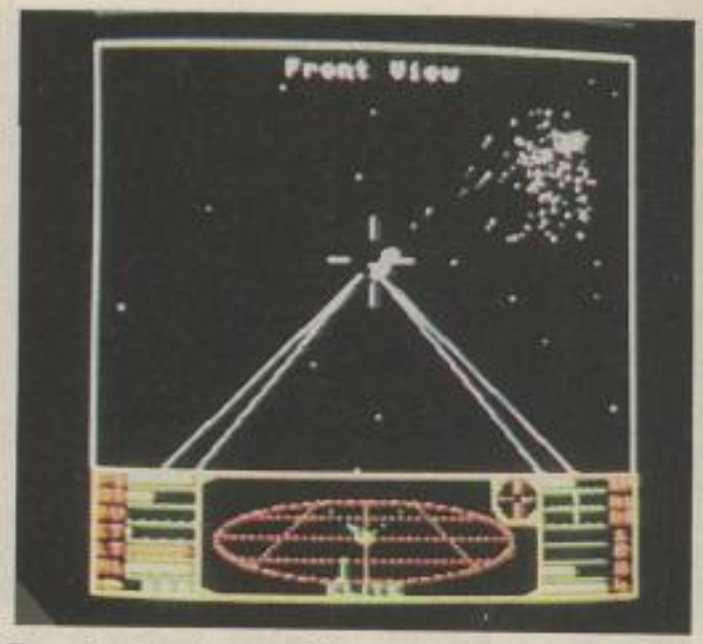


Python close up. This medium-range pirate vessel is about to be zapped into atoms.



The source of the trouble. A pirate space station spews out bevies of Thargoid cruisers.

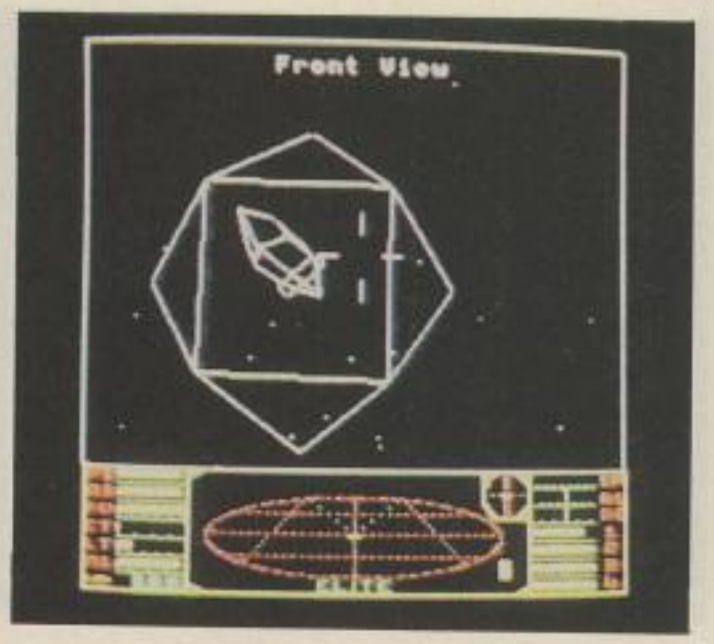
Pirate attack – again. A Mamba executes a high-speed frontal assault with laser cannons blazing.



Another pirate bites the dust. Each time you annihilate a pirate, you get a bounty from the galactic police.

Missiles away! Particularly difficult adversaries can be destroyed with heat-seeking missiles.

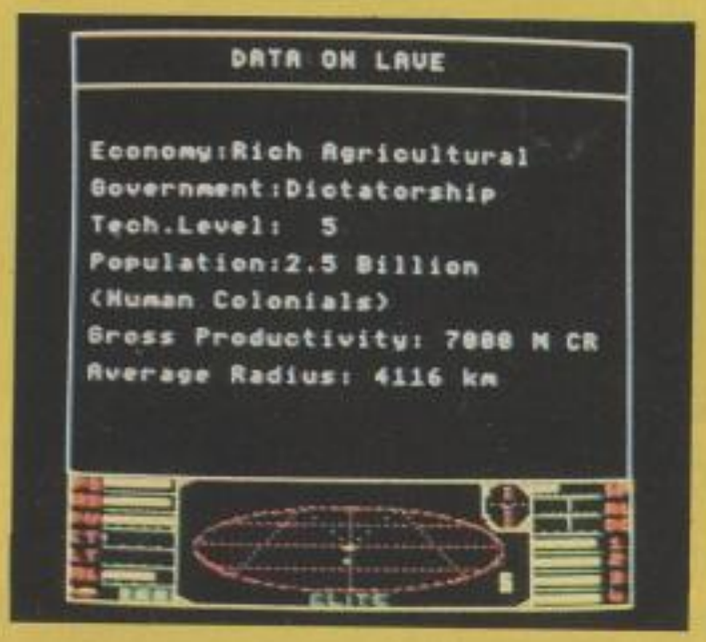
There are very few games on the market for the BBC B which actually stretch the machine to its limits. Elite is amongst them.

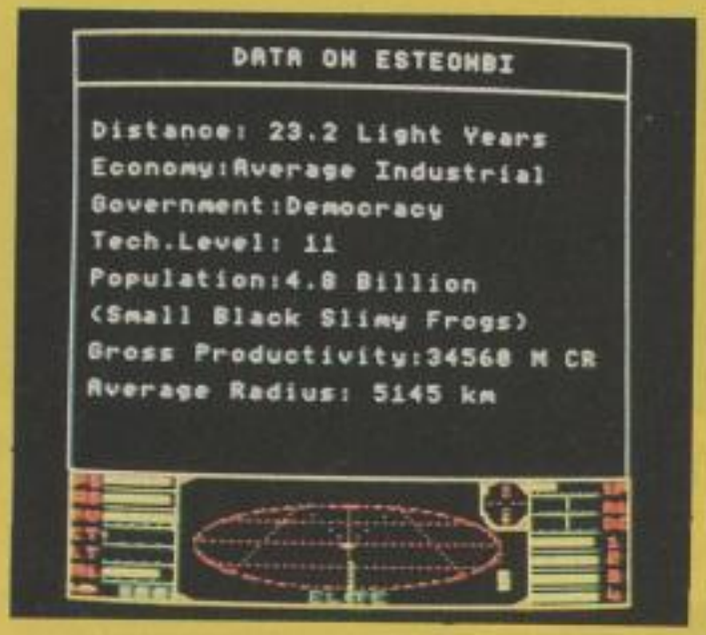


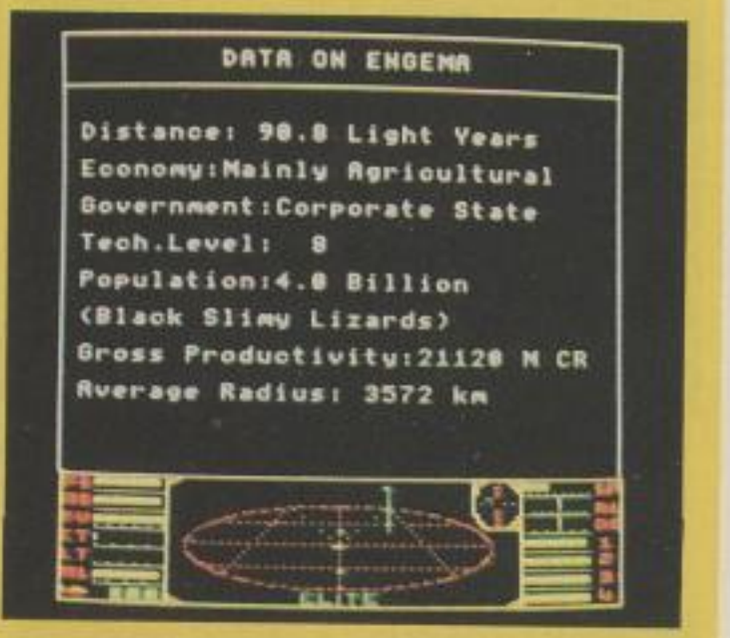
Police launch. A fleet of galactic police leaves to deal with the unusually high degree of piracy.

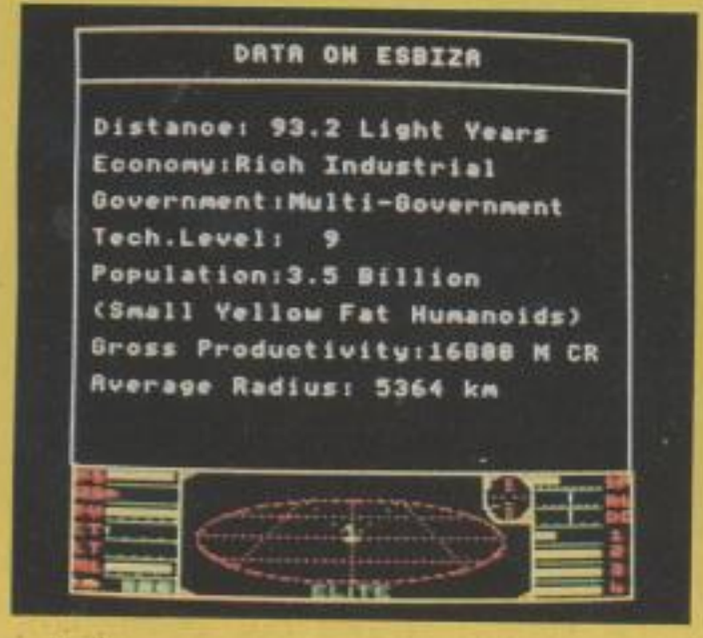
PLANETS TO VISIT – OR NOT!

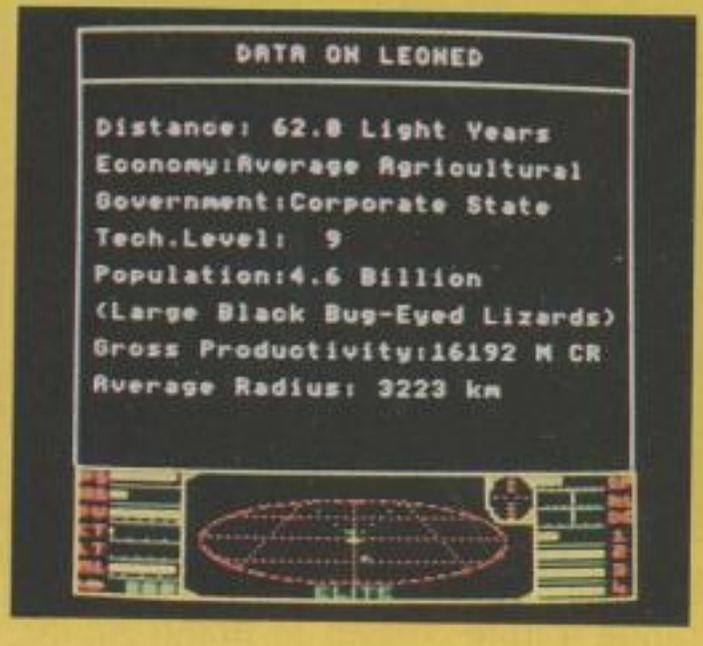
These six screen shots give information on just some of the planets in current hyperspace range. Elite is available on the BBC model B. From Acornsoft, the cassette costs £14.95 and the disc £17.65. The Electron version is in black and white.

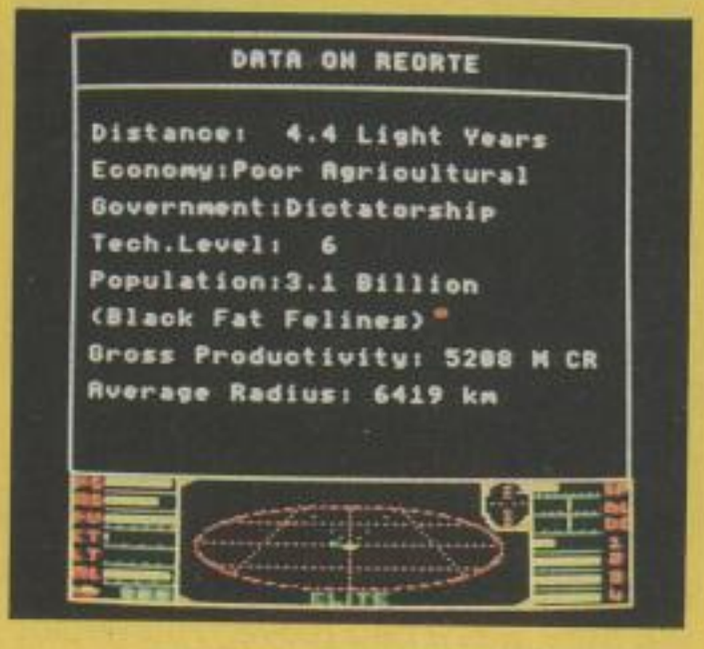












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Sinistar is a game for the hardened arcade addict. It has been highly rated by many of the world's greatest games designers. These include Eugene Jarvis of *Defender* fame, and Tim Skelley who wrote such minor classics as *Reactor, Star Castles, Rip Off* and *Insector.*

Despite this popularity, it has been all but forgotten under the massed invasion of laser disc machines.

Atari had the home rights for the game, but released it only on the elusive 5200 machine in the US. Designers here have shown an interest. So, in the hope that it will be an addition to the ranks of Atarisoft, I bring you the *Sinistar* file.

In Autumn 1982, the first *Sinistar* was shown off at the AMOA show in Chicago. With it was *Joust* – which got all the publicity and is now a classic game. The *Sinistar* machine was rather lifeless, and its reception rather cool.

After the show, the Williams design team continued to work on the game, until its official release early last year.

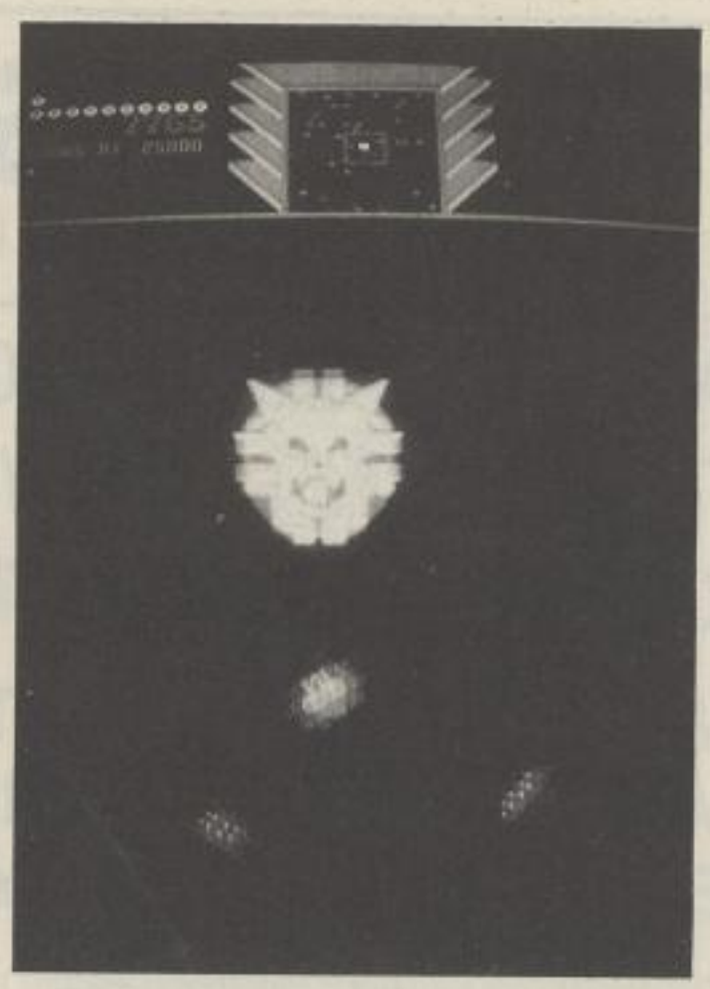
The presentation is excellent. Unfortunately, the game fails to stand out in an arcade. When put next to a *Robotron* or *Track & Field*, *Sinistar*'s mottled greys and blues don't catch the eye. You may have to look hard to find one.

But when the game is being played, the opposite is true. Booming sounds and a flurry of activity on the player's part easily grab onlookers' attention. As well as impressive sights and sounds, the emphasis is on gameplay. Williams scores very highly in this area as a rule, and *Sinistar* is no exception.

To start with, your tiny spaceship is under more control than any other game. The uninitiated can often be fooled into playing it like *Time Pilot.* There, the joystick covers rotation, and you stay at a constant speed. You can stay like that, but you won't last long.

The joystick works in forty-nine ways, covering directions and speed. Many say that the best way to control the ship is in small, delicate movements. But heaving on the joystick is just as effective, even if you must fight your own momentum.

Arcade classic *Sinistar* is difficult to master – but greatly rewards the skilful player. Ian Boffin shows how he totted up 500,000 points.



The only other controls are the fire and sinibomb buttons. The fire button allows you to annihilate everything but the Sinistar. The sinibomb button is your only weapon against the mighty Sinistar.

After the obligatory obscure starting sound and a picture revealing that you have no sinobombs and the Sinistar has no pieces, you are thrown inexorably into battle. You usually appear near a swarm of planetoids; you are reliably informed of this with a message under the line of lives.

The idea is to fly around the rock and pummel it with bullets until it starts belching glowing crystals. Then fly over the crystals to pick them up. Each crystal is worth 200 points, and gives you one sinibomb. Each rock is good for about half a dozen crystals. After this it will shudder violently and explode. It will do this also if you mine it too quickly.

All this might be easy – if it were not for the other alien creatures in the universe. Unlike many huge Williams releases, there are only two varieties of alien. The most common are the rather feeble workers, which are similar to cannon fodder. Usually, there are more dead than live workers on screen once you get your fire finger going. If you are lucky, use hold down for rapid fire.

With so many tasks, the workers divide them up between their numbers. The idea is that they will collectively accomplish all they set out to do.

The workers' prime aim is to build up the Sinistar. They can do this by undertaking three tasks:

- stay near your ship and wait for you to start mining planetoids
- wait near the warriors until they shoot rocks
- chase any stray crystals in space.

Once any of these tasks has been accomplished, the workers' only priority is to get the crystal back to the Sinistar. They are essentially dumb and harmless, and a collision will result only in both parties bouncing off each other.

The workers win through sheer weight of numbers. So shoot only those which are a direct threat to your crystals. The ones that escape then use the crystals to build the

SINISTAR

Sinistar, a clanking sound being made each time a piece is added. This may often be inaudible behind all the explosions.

Your other enemies are the warriors. These are a lot nastier than workers. This must rate as one of the most anti-social video games of all.

The warriors' priorities are:

- attack the player – this is a top priority
- mine the planetoids for crystals, by shooting them
- guard the Sinistar.

The warriors are also harmless to collide with. But the same can't be said of their bullets. These are fired from turrets on the warriors. It is safe to approach them from behind – but the guns are pretty fast, so you must shoot quickly.

The warriors start releasing torrents of bullets only if they are facing in your direction. So it is sometimes possible to hide behind planetoids or shoot bullets, both of which are usually dangerous and ill-advised moves. You can also shoot warriors as they appear on screen – they will often not fire for about a second.

The Sinistar, as I have mentioned, consists of crystals. At the Sinistar, they turn into pieces of either his face or rim. It takes twenty pieces to build the Sinistar. This is also the largest number of sinibombs your ship can hold. Once built, the seven pieces that make his face become one. So only thirteen pieces must be destroyed.

This can also be taken to mean that only 65% of your bombs must hit home.

When the Sinistar is alive and kicking, the screen says *"Beware. I live. . ."*. Take it as a warning. If you are low on sinibombs, mine like crazy. Otherwise, you could be eaten alive – literally.

The next time Sinistar speaks, he usually says *"run, coward, run"*. There is a loud rrooaaarr. Then he attacks. It may be tempting, but there is no way you can turn tail and run. He is a darn sight faster than you are. Now is the time you must meet him in head-to-head combat, and use all those bombs you saved.

This is a rough guide to what happens on screen. But *Sinistar* is one of the few games in which you can develop your own style of gamepley.

"The screen will say 'Beware. I live'. Mine like crazy – or you could be eaten alive"

On the first zone, I simply mine like made until the warriors arrive. Then I alternate between killing warriors and mining crystals.

Soon after, I often find the Sinistar on the scanner. So I fly to where it is being built, quite often near a swarm of planetoids.

The number of warriors is decidedly low on the first ware, so you can last for about thirty minutes just mining and bombing. When I want to advance to the next zone, I stock up a full twenty sinibombs, and wait for Sinistar to come alive. Once he says *"run, coward, run"*, I drop about ten sinibombs. All the while I continue mining up to a full tank again while my hits on him slow down.

Then I annihilate him with a volley of bombs as I fly around him. I drop the bombs at strategic points to avoid sinibomb interceptions by workers and warriors. In this way, I can get into the next zone with quite a few bombs.

15,000 points richer, I enter the second worker zone. There are lots more of these.

From here on, the outward ferocity of warrior attacks means each zone is more a case of survival. It is not advisable to hunt the Sinistar and attack him while he is being built. Stock up on bombs and kill him as in the first wave. This will be more difficult as the workers will try to rebuild him.

Once again, try to reach the warrior zone with up to twelve sinibombs. The warrior zone is decidedly nasty. You must watch your step to avoid being plastered by bullets in all directions. Try to be as fast and unpredictable as possible, in the hope of confusing them.

Kill the Sinistar as in the previous two zones, but be quicker.

The next zone is a planetoid one. After the last two, this is like a breather. You should try to get out of this zone with a full tank.

The next zone is the ultimate in nastiness. It is the void zone, and is the total opposite of the previous zone. There are next to no planetoids. I have completed this zone only once, so don't be too disappointed if you fail the first time.

Another useful trick is to drop one sinibomb and follow it to the Sinistar. Hopefully, it won't hit anything on route.

I have also been told that there is a way to get 255 men if you are the second player. Lose your last man by being eaten by the Sinistar – dropping all bombs simultaneously and killing the Sinistar.

It is a shame to see players turn a blind eye to this game, deterred by the difficulty and speed. It may be difficult to master, but it really rewards the skilful player.

The world record for *Sinistar* is only 791,000 points. This is almost in my grasp at just over 500,000 points – and I haven't been playing it long. It's about time us British game-stars challenged the Americans who hold every record except three – *Solar Quest*, *Juno First*, and *Exerion*. □

SINISTAR

HIGH NOON

Howdee, partners! Grab your guns cos you're gonna have to make your last stand. John Griffiths earns his sheriff's badge.

As sheriff of this here town, I must say that I haven't had as much fun in a long time.

Games nowadays are judged mainly on the standard of their graphics and playability. This game has block graphics and is fairly repetitious. So what makes it a winner?

The most outstanding feature of *High Noon* is its atmosphere. I became acquainted more and more with the separate characters as I played. I really felt I was there amongst the action. Gradually, the game grew on me.

Like all good games, there is a story behind the action. In this case, the programmers didn't have to use their imagination too much. The main story has been told in the film *High Noon* starring Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly. And the excellent music accompanying the game has also been taken from the film sound track by Dimitri Tiomkin.

For those of you who haven't seen the film, here's the plot. You are the sheriff of a law-abiding town. Suddenly, there is a rush of bandits and robbers hitting the town in an unwelcome surge of violence. You call on the local town folk to help you, but they're too scared. You're on your own.

Armed with only a gun, you have the mammoth task of cleaning up the town and maintaining peace in the west. You must shoot the outlaws, to stop them from raiding the bank and carrying off the can-can girls from Saucy Sue's bar next door.

The game's idea may seem simple at first, but it can get complicated.

SPECIFICATION

Game: High Noon
Supplier: Ocean
Machine: Commodore 64
Price: £7.90
Rating: Value 3
Graphics 4
Sound 4.5
Gameplay 4

The opening screen is made up of several buildings. Some are just for scenery, but the others are important.

The first of these is the jail. This is important only at the beginning, when you are shown leaving it to face the onslaught of outlaws. The next building is the bar belonging to Saucy Sue. After this comes the bank. Finally, there is the undertakers, kept by the slimy Riga Mortis.

Mr Mortis seems to be the only person in good spirits, not surprising with such an increase in business. He has the ghoulish task of carrying away the bodies to be embalmed. He wears a top hat and tails, and scampers about the screen in glee collecting the bodies. Mr Mortis has no time for frills like a cart to carry the dead, so he drags them by their feet instead. Sensibly, he wears a bullet-proof vest; all bullets pass through him. He does have one saving grace: if you're shot, he'll collect your body before the gangsters'.

The other characters look like typical cowboys in green, fawn and red shirts. The outlaws are distinguishable by their black kerchiefs. You, of course, wear white.

The first outlaws come on foot, armed with guns not unlike yours. They won't hesitate to shoot you as they make their way to the bank to take the cash in its canvas bag, or to the bar to take away one of the girls. Each girl, incidentally, has a different coloured dress, and kicks and squirms effectively.

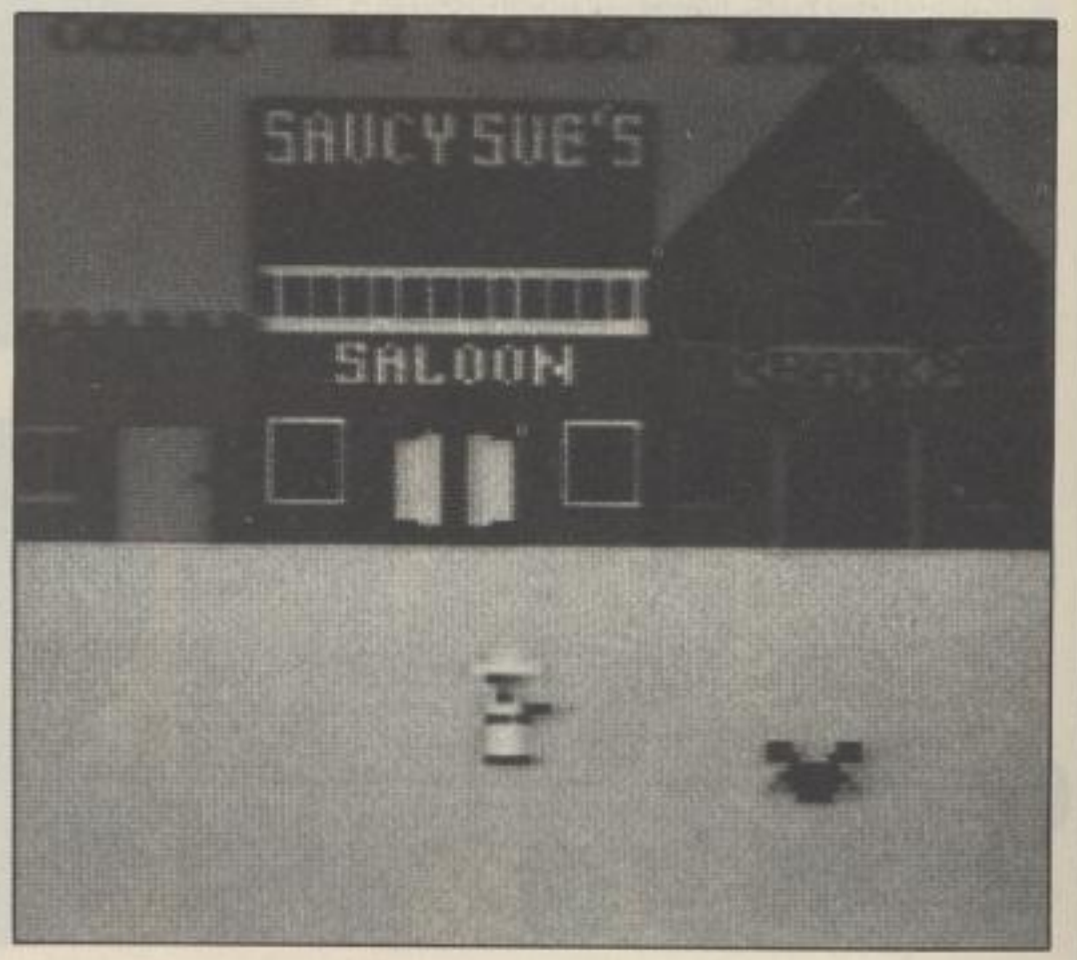
When you sort these out, you have more bandits to contend with. They appear at the same time as the first ones, but are on horseback. They swing in the saddle, and fire in a pretty nifty way.

The last of the masked men are the worst, and the most cunning. They take a less subtle approach, but they go about it craftily. They carry dynamite. If you're not careful, they'll creep up on you and drop their deadly cargo. This explodes in a nice fashion – so you'ld better get out of the way.

As you progress through the game, all three types attack simultaneously.

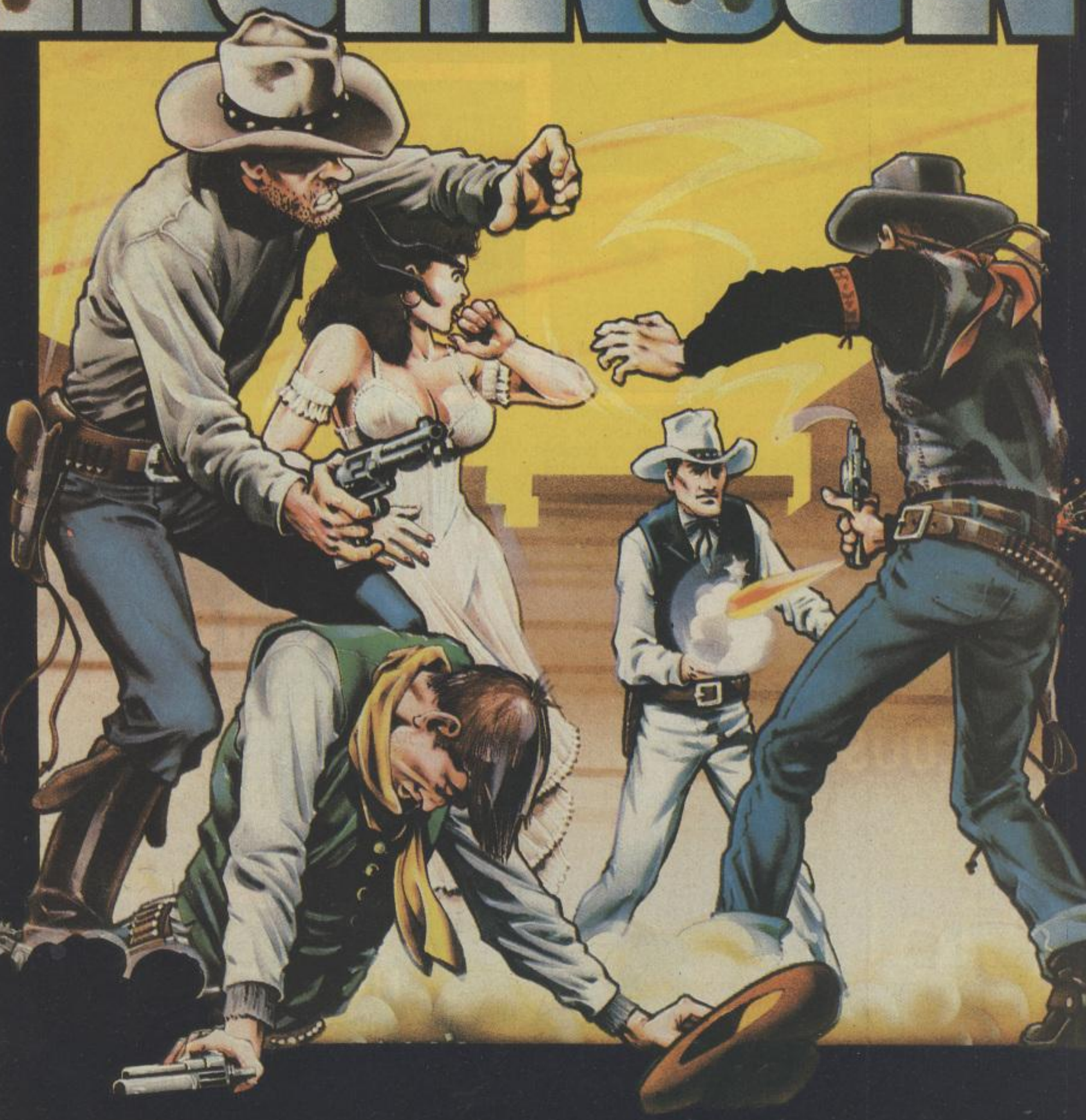
The graphics are fairly detailed in places, even if they are a little square. The separate movements of all the creatures as they strut about is marvellous. There are also some interesting features, and some thoughtful ideas. To my surprise and joy, the sheriff can hide inside the three main buildings. You can just see him there by looking through the windows. And when you go in and out of the bar you pass through a pair of old western swing doors.

There are two other features I liked. When the bandits make off



PHOTOGRAPHS: PHILIP DE-ASHA

HIGH NOON



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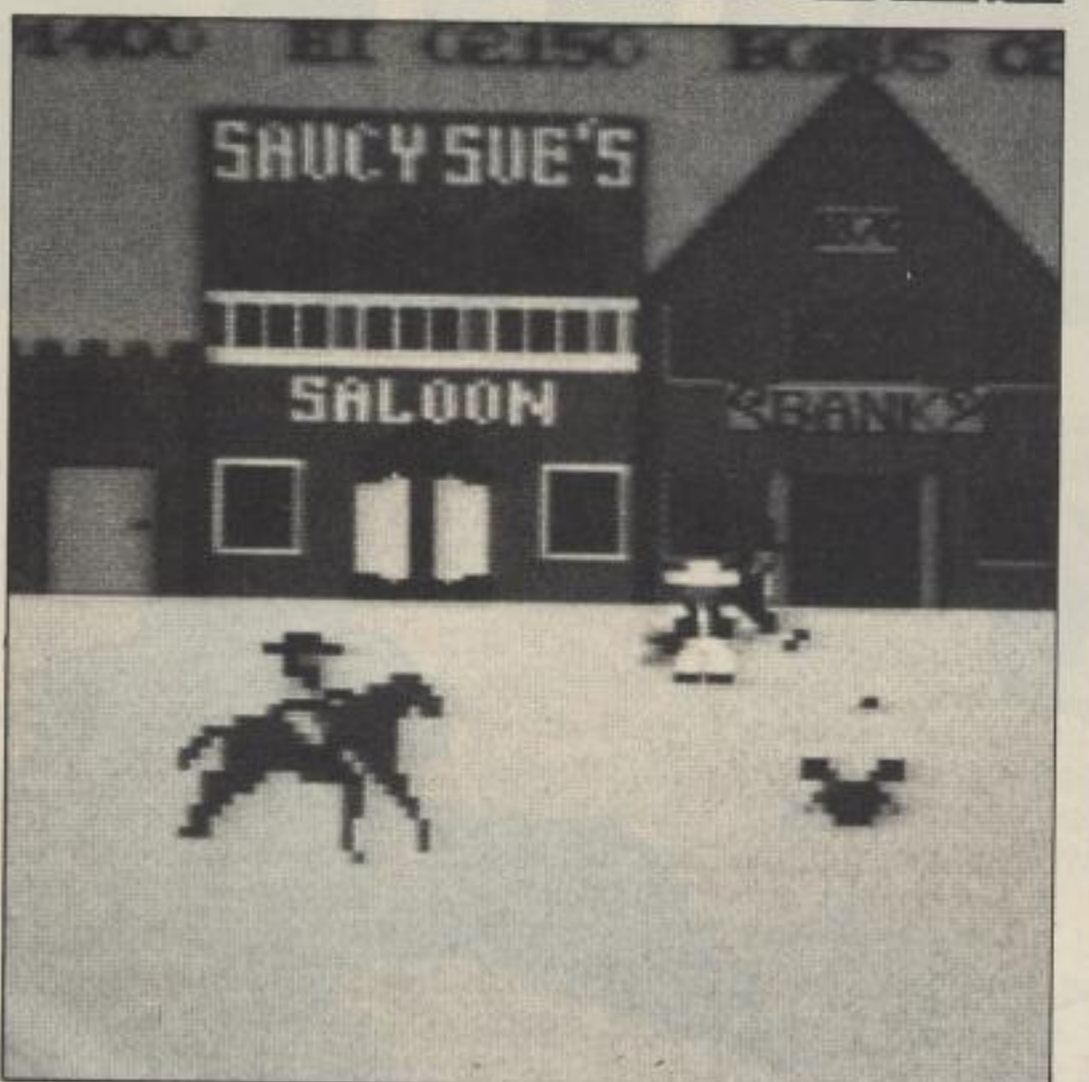
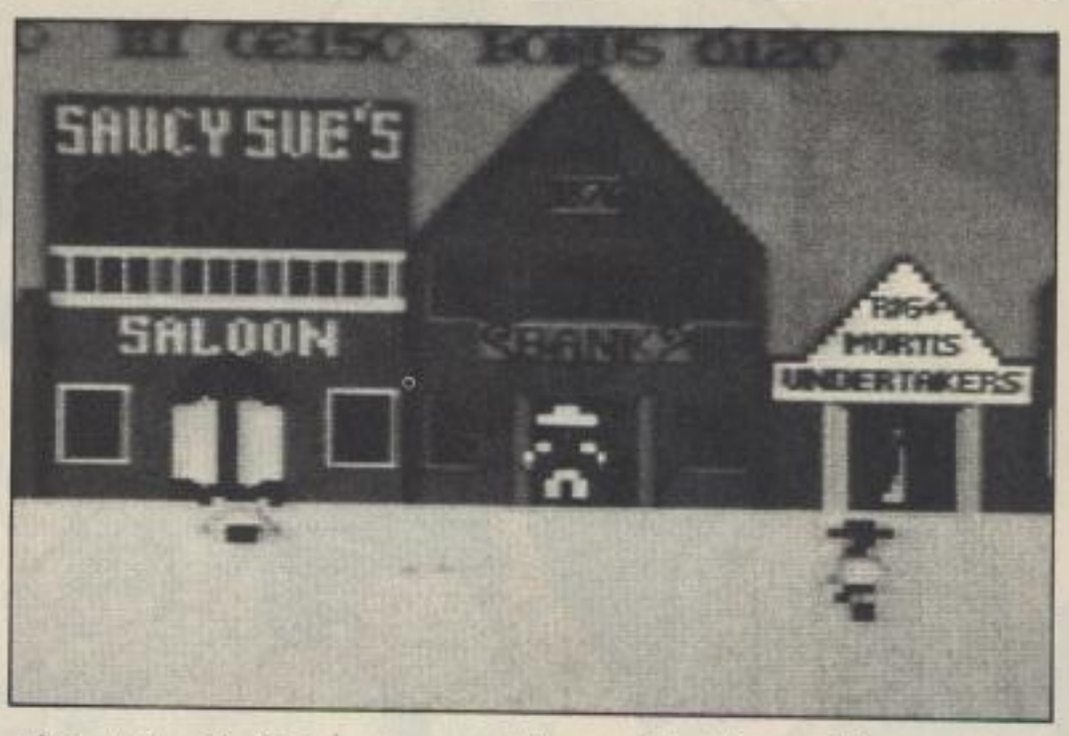
HIGH NOON





with the girls, they can be shot. But the sheriff is an automatic gentleman – the girls never get hit, and run to safety unharmed. The horses are similarly protected.

At the end of each wave, there is a chance to add a bonus to your accumulated score. This is done through a sudden-death quick draw. You and a masked fighter stand in the centre of the sandtrack. Whoever shoots first, wins. If it's you, you get a bonus and go to the next wave.

If you are good enough, you will eventually be able to track down the outlaws to their "hole in the wall" lair for the final showdown. This will decide if law and order will prevail.

There is a title page on screen while the game is loading. Once loaded, the music starts. The main sound effects are used for shooting, dynamite explosions, and the thud of outlaws as they hit the dust.

Even though this game is fairly original, it does have some similarities to other games. It's a shoot 'em out as opposed to a shoot 'em up – like a slower *Robotron*. Strangely, the game most near to *High Noon* in feel, animation and excitement is Commodore's *International Soccer*. But perhaps this is not surprising: both games were programmed by Andrew Spencer. In this latest game, he worked with another author, Stephen Wiggins.

Hints and tips.

- If you stay in the centre of the screen, you are a very easy target. So make your way to the top of the screen and the safety of the buildings as soon as possible. Fire as you go, both left and right. You're very likely to hit one of the bandits as he appears on the screen.
- You will gain more points for killing bandits quickly. But be careful – you must stand still when you shoot.
- When it comes to shooting, aim at the bandits' heads or slightly above. Even then, watch out! They usually fire one last shot before hitting the dirt, so move immediately after firing.
- One trick I like to use is hiding in the bank, where you can't be hit, then jumping out with a surprise attack. You can't shoot when you're in the building. Don't get too dependent on the buildings, however. There are none in the last scene.
- To get the bandit riders, go to the top of the screen. Fire downwards.
- The instructions suggest that you can trust the bandits to be cowardly, that they won't shoot you if one of their own men is in the way. This is a load of rubbish – I've been killed many times relying on this rule.
- The dynamite bandits walk onto the screen like the others. The only way you can find out if they are carrying dynamite is to hide. This makes them stand still. Once you have determined where they are, the best strategy is to stand just outside the bank and wait until they drop their deadly load. As soon as they do this, nip inside the bank for safety. They carry only one set of explosives, so you can then pick them off.
- As you progress, stay as near as you can to the bank. The outlaws will start shooting through the windows of the buildings, and they'll get you if you're not near enough to hide.
- I have tried to watch the different coloured fighters to spot different characteristics. But they all seem to fire and move in much the same way.

Summing up. This is a strange mixture of a game. Unlike most 'mega-games' nowadays, *High Noon* has only two screens. But there is so much action that it doesn't matter.

The graphics are good, but could have been better. The animation is very good, and the sound excellent. Its most outstanding feature, as I've said before, is that it is such fun to play.

High Noon has only one control, the joystick. The gun you use is supposed to be a six-shooter – but the number of bullets you release makes it look more like a 6,000-shooter. If you have a Quickshot II, it's not much more use than a joystick without the rapid-fire option. But when it comes to the shoot out at the end of each wave, it becomes very useful. All you need to do is switch to autofire and push right. The fighter doesn't stand a chance.

On the whole, *High Noon* is very enjoyable. I wouldn't recommend it madly because I think different types of games are a question of taste. But do give it a chance, and see if it doesn't grow on you as it did on me. □

THE ARCADE SCENE

Screen games usually appear in the arcades long before we see them on home systems. Andy Harris (aka King Coinop) continues his search to find the best.

The last issue of *TV Gamer* mentioned that *I, Robot* had invaded the US arcades. I had a chance to see it here.

You, the player, are an unhappy interface robot in rebellion against Big Brother and his agents, the evil eyes. Your mission is to destroy the evil eye and reach the pyramids. There, you can collect jewels and, of course, points. There are over 100 levels with twenty-two different playfields. Between each round is a bonus stage.

The robot advances by touching all the red zones on the screen. The zones are separated by yawning space – so you must jump from one to another.

The evil eye takes a dim view of jumping robots. So you can jump only when the eye is looking the other way. If it does see you, it will express its displeasure by zapping you with a cosmic glare.

The red zones form a defensive shield around the eye. When you've touched all of them, the eye is defenceless. You can now destroy it, and reach the magic pyramid. While you're hopping from red to red, there is a constant threat from hostile forces, killer birds, giant beach balls, pyramid mines and buzz saws.

If you survive these hazards and destroy the eye, you will launch into space and shoot your way through more obstacles. Eventually, you reach the next area of red zones.

A unique feature of *I, Robot* is the viewpoint. This allows you to change your view of the game from overhead to ground level, or anywhere between. After completion of level twenty-six, this feature is brought into use when the 'viewer killer' makes its appearance.

The only way to avoid this awesome creature is to dodge it by altering your viewpoint. Don't forget – it's not the robot that's under attack, but the player!

What we have is a mixture of maze game and space shoot 'em up plus added ingredients not found in any other arcade game. □

The screen below left above was created by Andy Harris, in Doodle City.

Here it is, the one you've been waiting for: the sequel – or is it the prequel? – to *Star Wars*. No vector scanning this time or fancy cockpit cabinets, just a straightforward, honest-to-goodness, coin-operated arcade game: *Return of the Jedi*.

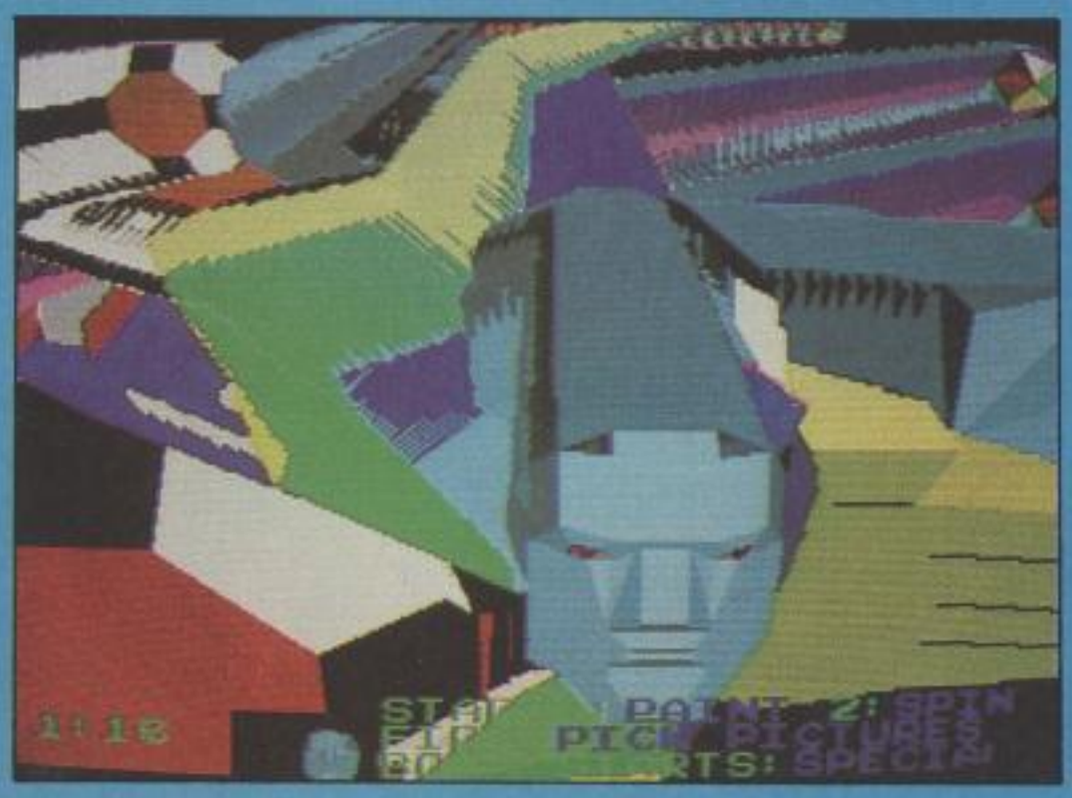
The action takes place in the forest of Endor, in outer space. It is, of course, inside the death star. The graphics are excellent, and the voice synthesis the best yet. Darth Vader, R2D2, the Wookie and others are unmistakable as they make their stereo utterances.

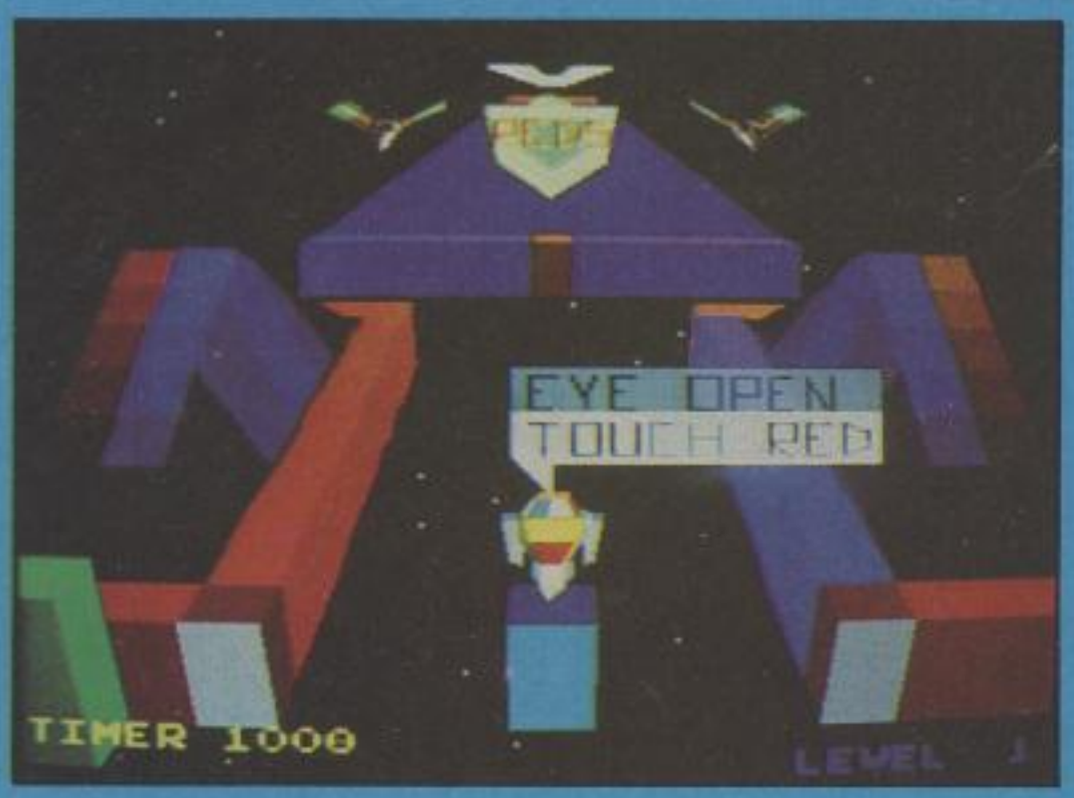
Phase one starts in the forest of Endor. There, Luke Skywalker mounts his motorcycle, and heads off through the trees in search of Princess Leia and the rest of the team.

You can help him on his travels. Firstly, naturally enough, try not to hit the trees. When the enemy stormtroopers give chase, you can shoot them by getting behind them or knocking them into the trees with your machine. Watch out for Ewok traps. And make sure that you get through them first, or Luke will be caught by the wire strung between the trees.

For extra points, look for the split log and steer through it. You are almost safe now, and must prepare for the next phase – inside the death star.

Luke's vehicle is now a skyfighter, and he is travelling through what





THE ARCADE SCENE

looks like a plumber's nightmare. Avoid hitting the red pipes and, as before, shoot the enemy craft or bump into them and knock them into oblivion.

Eventually, you will reach the death star's reactor chamber. Shoot the flame. Then get out fast the way you came in – before the reactor explodes and destroys you along with the dastardly Darth and his death-dealing domicile.

Meanwhile, back in the forest, the Wookie has climbed inside a walker. This is a sort of sardine can on legs, otherwise known as an At-At. As he makes his way through the forest, avoid the rolling logs and falling rocks which threaten to trip him up. Shoot the enemy scouts for extra points.

Every so often, and without warning, the scene changes. You find yourself in deepest space, attacking a mysterious space station and being attacked by a motley selection of alien artillery.

Just as you've got used to being in space, the scene changes back to the relative tranquility of the forest.

Return Of The Jedi is a great game. It's not an all-time classic, but it is bags of fun for everyone. Like the film, this one should be around for a long time to come.

Tired of tennis? Bored with boxing? Fed up with football? Then keep up with karate.

When I first heard about this game, I had difficulty believing that it could even begin to recreate the mysterious ways of the oriental martial art. After several bruising bouts, I was forced to admit that I was wrong.

First things first. A player can compete against the machine or against another human opponent. Both options are equally satisfactory – unless your opponent happens to be a black belt.

Each player has two four-way joysticks, and I calculate that this permits sixteen positions. Each position represents a particular attacking or defensive move. Put stick A up and stick B down, for instance, and your plucky fighter delivers a delicate kick to his opponent's throat.

You can punch, kick in the stomach, elbow, and somersault once you have mastered the controls. This is not easy at first, and becomes more difficult after you have received a subtle kick below the belt. With practice and perseverance, you will master the technique.

Insert five groats – one groat equals four pence – and you are given a little time to warm up before the contest. You need this time to check the moves.

The referee is a sinister-looking fellow with a droopy moustache. He starts the game, and is present at all times to give his verdict on the proceedings. If he thinks a hit was excellent, he awards one point. For a fair hit, you get only a half point. Each bout lasts until one of the contestants has scored three points.

If you win the bout, you go on to the bonus stage. Here you must deal with flying objects, charging bulls, piles of bricks, and more. Jump, kick or punch as seems appropriate. I found that kicking the bull is not a good idea. Try jumping over it instead.

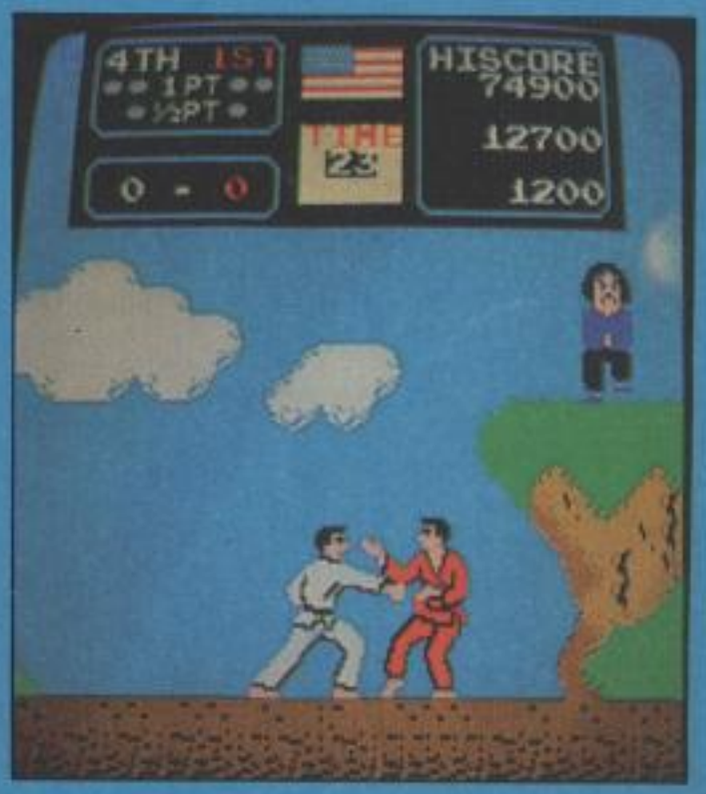
The next bout takes place in a different setting. Otherwise, things are much the same as before. Your new opponent is tougher than the previous, of course. But no one is invincible.

If you are playing the computer, use as many moves as possible. This confuses your opponent, and makes it harder for him to retaliate.

The graphics are pretty basic on this game, and the sound effects primitive. But the words ee-arrggh and ay-errh are very realistic!

Karate Champ achieves its aim better than just about any other sporting arcade game I've seen – even those which use more sophisticated technology. It's also one of the few games which has caused me to laugh out loud at frequent intervals. Play and you'll soon see why.

One last thing. There is no mention of this in the game instructions, but if you're taking *Karate Champ* seriously, you should bow to the machine before and after a game. That's even if you lose. Courtesy costs nothing. □



D·A·V·E R·A·V·E·S·!

Last month, Dave Harvey introduced music and sound on the Atari. In this month's column he gives two short programs to help you get them the easy way. And the long-lost Jon Dean at last reveals his whereabouts.

Let's look at the first program. It enables you to sound several different percussion and sound effects by pressing the keys that spell out *TVGAMER*. You can alter the program, if you wish, to make your own sounds.

```
0 REM *** PROGRAM BY DAVID
"WANNA PLAY DOUBLES?"
HARVEY AND REGINALD SOUL
1 GR.18:POKE 712,12:SE. 2,3,4:?
  #6;"PERCUSSION
PROGRAM":REM IN INVERSE
2 GOS.500
5 X=PEEK(764)
10 IF X=45 THEN 100
11 IF X=16 THEN 150
12 IF X=61 THEN 200
13 IF X=63 THEN 250
14 IF X=37 THEN 300
15 IF X=42 THEN 350
16 IF X=40 THEN 400
20 GOTO 5
100 FOR D=15 TO 0 STEP-1:    SO.
0,255,12,D:NEXT D:POKE
  764,0:GOTO 5
150 FOR D=15 TO 0
  STEP-1:SO.0,6,8,D:NEXT
  D:POKE 764,0:GOTO 5
200 FOR D=15 TO 0
STEP-1:SO.0,5,8,D:SO.1,6,8,D:
  SO.2,7,8,D:SO.3,8,8,D:NEXT
  D:POKE 764,0:GOTO 5
250 FOR D=15 TO 0 STEP-1:FOR
  N=1 TO 3:SO.0,D+N*251,
8,D*NEXT N:NEXT D:POKE
764,0:GOTO 5
300 FOR D=15 TO 0
  STEP-1:SO.0,251,12,D:NEXT
  D:POKE 764,0:GOTO 5
350 FOR D=15 TO STEP-1:
SO.0,13,12,D:SO.1,14,12,D:
SO.2,15,12,D:SO.3,16,12,D:NEXT D:
POKE 764,0:GOTO5
400 FOR D=15 TO 0
STEP-1:SO.0,D/4*2.2564+(RND
  (1)*123.2521),10,D:NEXT
  D:POKE 764,0:GOTO 5
499 END
500 REM *** DID YOU HEAR
  ABOUT THE PAPER COWBOY
  WHO WAS HUNG FOR
  RUSTLING/
501 REM *** TVGAMER IN
  INVERSE
510 ? #6;"":? #6;"T = BASS    DRUM"
512 ? #6;"V = CLAP"
514 ? #6;"G = SHOT"
516 ? #6;"A = WARPED DRUMS"
518 ? #6;"M =
  SYNTH-BASS-DRUM"
520 ? #6;"E = odd"
522 ? #6;"R = REGGIE
  SURPRISE":RET.:REM HIS
  IDEA, NOT MINE.
```

If you are feeling a little lazy, and find you haven't enough strength to press the keys down, we suggest you type in this program.

```
0 REM *** RHYTHM BY REGGIE
10 FOR D=15 TO 0
  STEP-1:SO.0,251,8,D:NEXT
  D:GOS.100
20 FOR D=15 TO 0
  STEP-1:SO.0,5,8,D:NEXT
  D:GOS.100
30 FOR D=15 TO 0
  STEP-1:SO.0,251,8,D:NEXT
  D:GOS.100
40 FOR D=15 TO 0 STEP-1:
SO.0,5,8,D:SO.1,6,8,
  D:SO.2,7,8,D:SO.3,8,8,D:NEXT
  D:GOTO 10
100 FOR N=1 TO 100:NEXT    N:RET
```

You will note (!) that, in the two programs, some of the commands have been abbreviated. Sound, for example, is represented by SO. This is just to save you time typing in the program.

Regular readers of TV Gamer will have read of Dave's search in vain for Jon Dean of Atari. The tom toms' message travelled swiftly...

You've done it! Exposed my secret to the world!

As you and Reggie must have found out, I never went to Africa – my mission was far more deadly!

I was sent out alone into the murky depths of Slough...yes...I got moved from the ground floor...up to the dreaded first floor of Atari House! I knew too much, and so there was only one thing they could do with me...

(cue 'dripping' sounds, echo; and read in Vincent Price voice:)

At one end of the building is a small room which few dare to enter ...this is where software development occurs...and it's not a pretty sight.

Boris runs software development, assisted by Egor – these creatures rarely come out of the small room. For just over a year, I had been assisting them with their experiments. This was it – my big chance!

While they weren't looking, I took the grenade and blasted a hole in the wall, and ran to the market place.

So now, I'm in marketing!

I've managed to bribe the raving lunatic, have bought my shovel, and have found the Temple Treasure Room. What will happen next, I do not know. I was considering going to Africa, but I hear that it's full of reviewers falling off benches...

From Jon 'Indiana' Dean □

PSYCHO SHOPPER
Machine: Vic 20 (8/16K expansion; joystick option)
Supplier: Mastertronic
Price: £1.99
Type of game: skill
If you've ever wondered what being attacked by a granny is like, this is the game for you. It's the reverse of what you read in the popular press about OAPs.

There are four screens to *Psycho Shopper*. In each, there is one or more Gladys Granny. Avoid her – her touch is deadly.

Screen one is the pedestrian crossing. Here Gladys patrols the centre of the screen. Lorries and cars must be dodged, and you must cross using the zebra crossing. To add to the confusion, you must collect coins, which means it is nearly impossible to get past Gladys.

With perseverance, you can get onto the second screen. You'll wish you hadn't.

Here six lanes of traffic confront you, again with Gladys patrolling the centre. To cross to the centre, you must pick up coins and avoid lorries, cars and dragsters.

Once onto the centre, two coins must be picked up. Then it's to the highway once again.

The first two screens are frustrating at times. But credit must be given to the programmer as the graphics are good. Alas, the last two screens don't live up to the standard set by their predecessors.

The third screen is the railway, perhaps the hardest screen. Not only must you collect coins, you must also dodge six Gladys Grannies and six Intercity trains.

Screen seven shows a supermarket. If I said the train screen was the hardest, this is impossible.

The game may be suited to arcade champs; it's simply too hard for a beginner.

Jason Habgood

Value 3
Graphics 3.5
Sound 2.5
Gameplay 2.5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SPIDERS/SIMON/GRANNY
Machine: CGL/Sord M5 (Basic 1 or 6)
Supplier: CGL Software
Price: £12.95
Type of game: three-in-one
Spiders is a cat and mouse chase game. You take the role of a rather large man trying to avoid three chasing spiders. The idea is to stay alive as long as possible. There is a clock at the bottom of the screen recording the length of time you survive.

To make the game harder, two-thirds of the screen is filled by spiders' webs. You can't move across them – but the spiders can.

December GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TV Gamer's review panel takes an honest look at the bewildering choice of computer and dedicated-machine games flooding the shops. We recommend what to buy – or avoid! Above all, enjoy your game.

Sound is quite nice, and sort of spooky.

Simon is a computer version of the game of the same name. The idea is to correctly repeat what the computer does.

There are four numbered boxes on the screen. These flash colours in a random order for you to try and repeat. Each time you get it right, the sequence gets one flash longer and faster. This is a simple but good, addictive game.

Granny is a version of the old favourite, *Frogger*. But on this version there are two roads to cross, instead of a road and a river.

You must go backwards and forwards across the roads ten times to pick up your granny. You have ten lives; each time a vehicle hits you, you lose a life.

Sound is non-existent and the graphics are jerky. It could have been much better.

The package is among the better offerings from CGL.

Paul Bessant

Value 1
Graphics 3
Sound 1
Gameplay 3

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

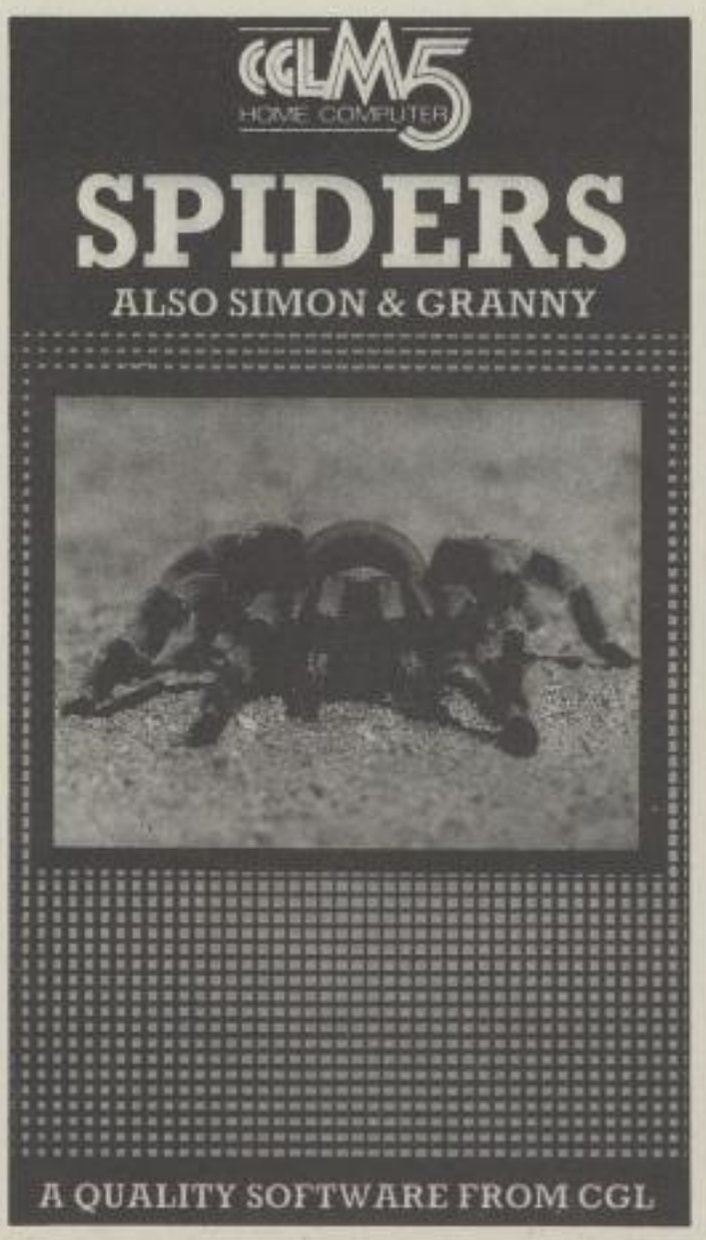
INTRIGUE
Machine: CGL/Sord M5 (Basic 1 or 6)
Supplier: CGL Software
Price: £5.95
Type of game: maze
If you find watching paint dry exciting, you'll like this game.

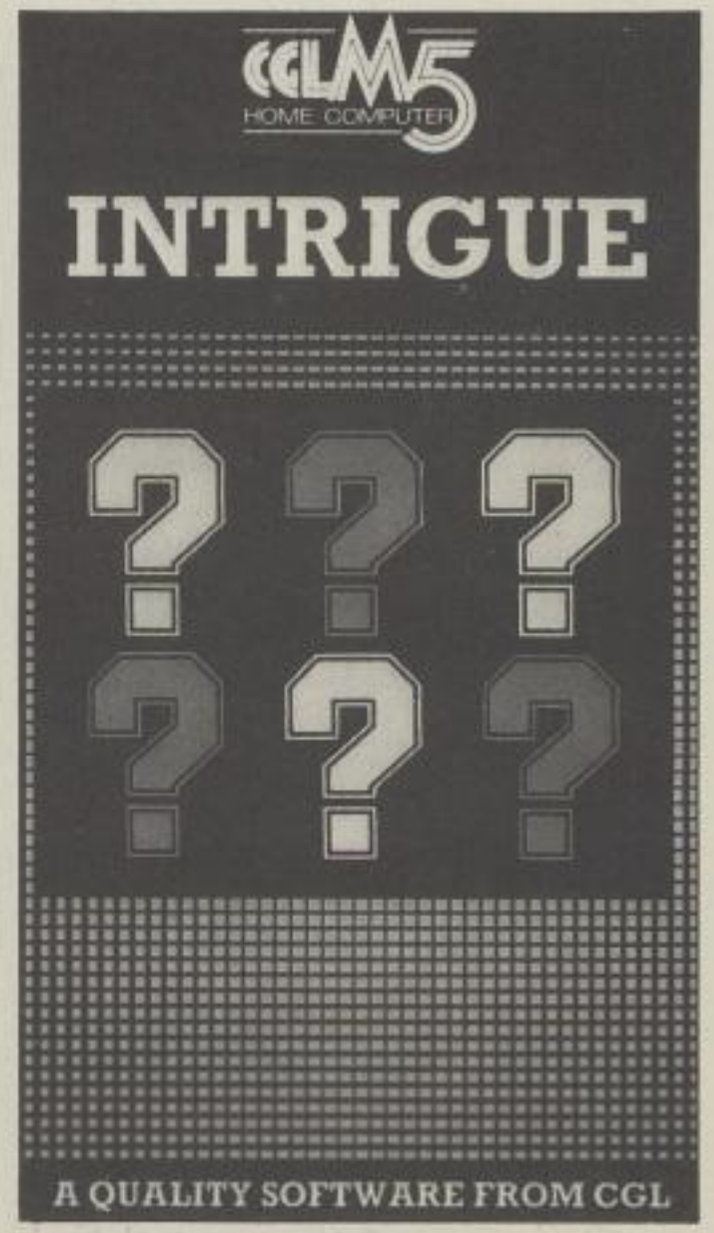
The game is a seven by seven grid. Starting at the centre, you must select the correct direction to reach the outer edge. Several hidden exits follow a pre-set sequence.

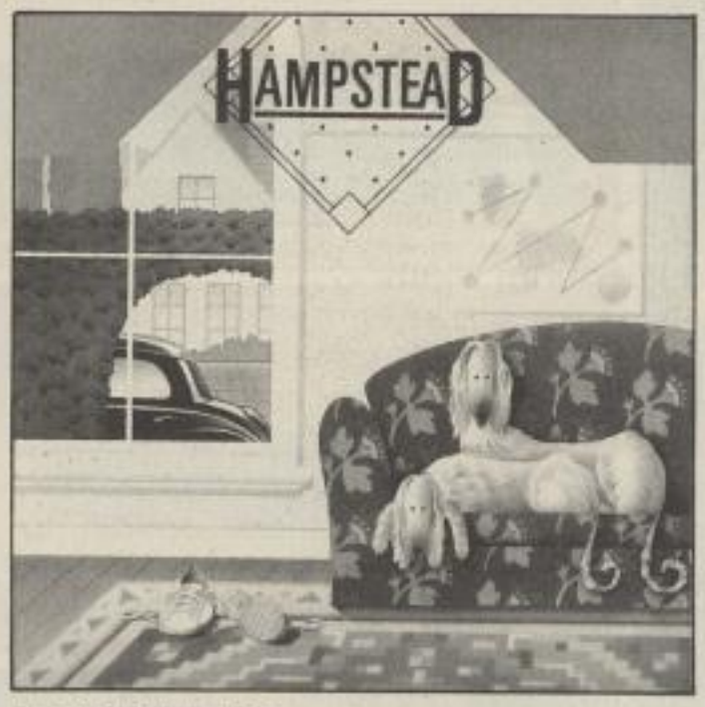
Unfortunately, for me the sequence was so complex that the game was unplayable.

Paul Bessant

Value 1
Graphics 3
Sound N/A
Gameplay 1







HAMPSTEAD
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Melbourne House
Price: £9.95
Type of game: adventure

The aim of *Hampstead* is to reach the pinnacle of social status, of which acquiring wealth is only part. To go up in the world, you must gain the respect and admiration of your fellow men. And there's more to that than a fat bank balance.

The object of the game is to "attain Hampstead". You must wear the right clothes, give the impression you know about art, be seen in the right places, live in the right house with the right partner, and use the correct type of transport.

PAGE GUIDE

To make things easier for our readers, below is a list of the pages on which you will find reviews for your machine. *BUT NOTE:* most games are being converted to run on a range of popular machines. Keep all TVG reviews even if the game is not for your machine – it's likely it will soon be.

Games	Pages
BBC	50
CGL	46
Commodore	48,50,51,52,57
MSX	50,57
Spectrum	47,52,54,57,60
Vic 20	46

The instructions tell you to lie, cheat, steal and defraud. And you know that makes sense.

There is a score command which tells you your percentage of completion of the adventure. *Hampstead* is very difficult. I managed to get only 38% – and I thought I was doing well.

Most of the commands are verb/noun. All words can be reduced to four letters, and the directions and some words to one letter. *Hampstead* is text only. I was disappointed with this, as it is by Melbourne House.

An annoying thing about *Hampstead* is that it does not print the directions you can go. So you must guess. This does not affect play too much, but it left some important locations hidden until later.

Occasionally, the adventure contains very funny pieces of text describing the positions you can get into. For instance, on my first attempt I left the house confidently on my bike. I was wearing only my bike clips – so was arrested for indecent exposure.

The following attempt, after finding clothes, I was mugged. After many other doomed attempts, I boarded a train. In minutes I was thrown out of a window by football hooligans. And when you type HELP, the program tells you to ring the Samaritans!

With the game comes an illustrated booklet giving background details on *Hampstead*, and many well hidden clues. The booklet, like the game, is humorous.

The response time of the game is very fast, and I enjoyed playing. You will play it for many weeks before it is solved.

Anthony Ackroyd

Value 3.5
Graphics N/A
Sound N/A
Gameplay 3.5

REVIEWERS

Each month we introduce members of TVG's 70-strong review panel.

MATTHEW JARVIS
Age: 16
Hobbies: hiking, arcades
Pet like: eating
Pet hate: people who pick holes in the Spectrum
Best game: *The Hobbit*
Worst game: *Frogger*

MARK SOUTHGATE
Age: 14
Hobbies: fishing, computing, reading
Pet like: chips and Coke
Pet hate: tomatoes
Best game: *Scramble*
Worst game: *Lunar Lander*

GARY ANDERSON
Age: 16
Hobbies: fell walking, art, computer games
Pet like: The Young Ones
Pet hate: gristle in sausages
Best game: *Monty Mole*
Worst game: *Road Roller*

DAVID MAHER
Age: 17
Hobbies: programming and Gaelic football
Pet like: sleeping
Pet hate: buses
Best game: *Decathlon*
Worst game: *Q*Bert*

DEBORAH LANDER
Age: 14
Hobbies: video games,
Pet like: music
Pet hate: homework, heavy metal, bigheads, dogs
Best game: *Black Hawk*,
Worst game: *Arcadia*

PAUL BESSANT
Age: 14
Hobbies: playing computer games
Pet like: cats, bargains
Pet hate: expensive software
Best game: *Pooyan*
Worst game: *Intrigue*

December GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEATH STAR INTERCEPTOR
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: System 3
Price: £9.99
Type of game: space shoot'em up

As you can guess from the title, the plot of this game is similar to that of the *Star Wars* film. I don't usually like shoot 'em ups, but for my money this version is enjoyable. I found it addictive – and beat the top score.

The story takes place in the year 4021. Earth has refused to give up any more of its people to be slaughtered in the galactic empire's mines. In punishment, the empire despatches its deathstar to obliterate the defiant world.

Earth's defence council knows it has only one hope. The deathstar has a weakness: the reactor which powers it. The reactor is protected by force fields, laser turrets and fighter craft. But a small Earth fighter could slip in and penetrate its defences. A direct hit on the reactor's exhaust port will make it go nova, taking the deathstar with it.

You – of course – must undertake the perilous mission. You are given the latest in space combat technology, the SF1 starfighter. Full mission briefing is given on board – which means the instructions are onscreen rather than on an accompanying leaflet.

When loading, a title page appears onscreen to show the game is loading correctly: a nice touch. Your instructions are then given, with a choice of four difficulty levels: cadet, pilot, commander and master.

There are twelve screens. You start at launch stage. The launch way is subjected to random tractor beam scanning from the deathstar. If you are caught in it, you will be destroyed.

Hurtling away from earth, you immediately engage enemy space ships. These include Tri Spheres, Droid Jets, Beta Fighters and Attack Pods. Hitting them is worth 250 points each, but you must hit some at a certain angle. The strategy is to destroy enough of these for the commander's ship to come out of the deathstar and attack you. Damage to his ship is worth 750 points. More, he must fly back. Follow him so that, when he flies through the opened forcefield, you can do so also.

Now you fly through a central trench – protected by hover tanks worth 250 points – to the exhaust port. The port is protected by its own force field – you must hit it when the centre is red.

The port is also protected by high-powered laser turrets with 100% accuracy at close range. Luckily, they are computer controlled to withstand attack from outside. It will take ten seconds to reprogram them – you'll need the time.

Especially dangerous in this game are tracking intercept missiles. Areas of the trench are also protected by charged barriers and vertically locking tractor beams. If you are caught in one, you can move only horizontally.

I do have a few quibbles with this game. The first is that nowhere in the instructions are you told to plug your joystick into port one. The second is that only by fiddling with the keys did I manage to return to the instructions or choice of difficulty level without reloading. But these are minor points.

At less than £10, *Death Star Interceptor* is worth buying.

D Boyd

Value 3.5
Graphics 4
Sound 2
Gameplay 3.5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BRISTLES
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: StateSoft
Price: £8.95
Type of game: skill

Bristles is the first game I have had from StateSoft. It has fast load, but I had to try three times before it loaded.

The aim is to paint rooms, using lifts and ladders, or by jumping from room to room. There is a time limit.

As you move around the rooms, you are pursued by flying half pints. These dash across the screen in a preset manner. You can jump over or duck under them.

For each screen cleared, you get two extra paint brushes. You can also gain bonus points by collecting paint rollers in some rooms. The quicker you are, the more points you gain.

Screen two has more rooms to paint. You will also meet flying half pints and dumb buckets. There are safe rooms on all screens where your pursuers will not enter. Use them.

Screen three is where you meet Brenda the brat. She is the superintendent's daughter, and the most annoying thing I have encountered in any game. She gets bored easily, so amuses herself by slapping hand prints on your newly painted walls. Brenda loves candy, so if you get the two candy canes, give them to her. She will flash with delight, and be distracted from her slap-happy ways for fifteen seconds per cane.

In screen four, you meet the leader of the buckets. This bucket chucker can really move. You can temporarily halt him by trapping him in the paint mixer.

Bristles has eight buildings and six skill levels. The game gets much harder each building. You will have to deal with clear varnish which you can't see, and try the game in the dark.

Up to four players can play in turn.

This game is a must for any collection. The graphics are good, and the sound passable. It will give you pleasure for a few months.

Steven Roberts

Value 4
Graphics 3
Sound 2
Gameplay 4

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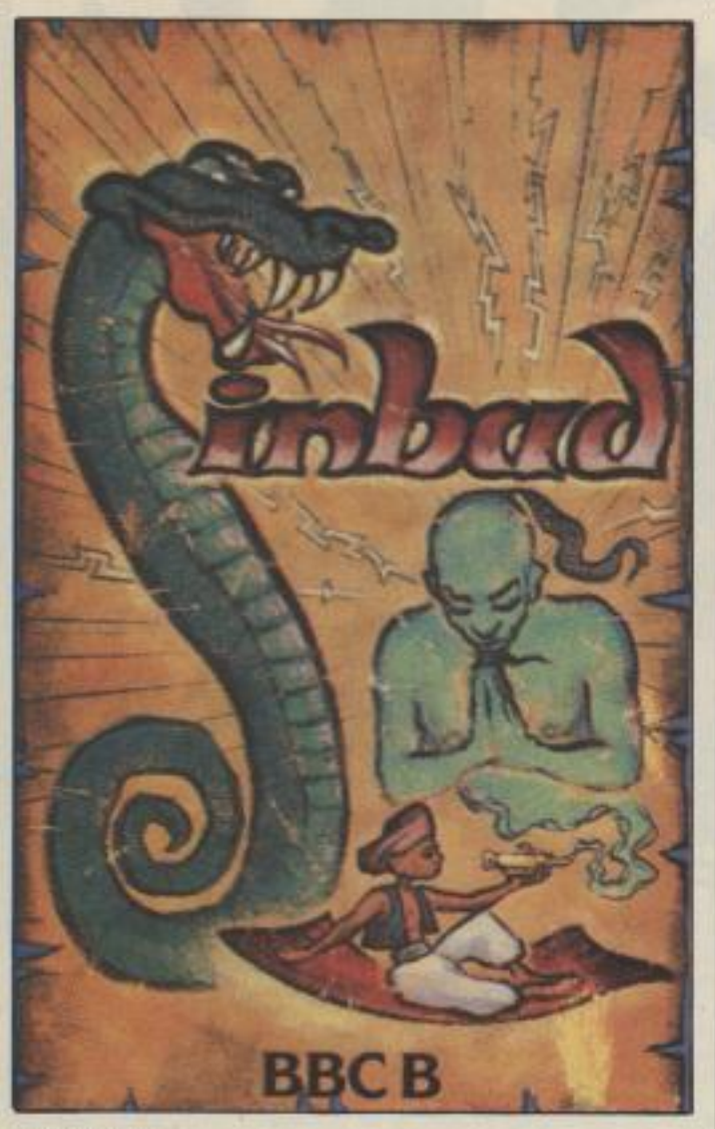


December GAME REVIEWS

SINBAD
Machine: BBC B (keyboard or joystick)
Supplier: Virgin Games
Price: £7.95
Type of game: skill

Remove your weary fingers from the fire buttons, and climb aboard your magic carpet to enjoy this delightful and original game. Even so, I think your fingers will be weary after having played this new release from Virgin.

You play the part of Sinbad, ace carpet flyer. It's your job on the first screen to convert all Sinbad's enemies into leading a peaceful way of life. You do this by touching them, either from the rope ladder or the magic carpet. When touched, they change colour. You must convert them all before going on to the next screen.

The second screen has Sinbad in outer space, high above Earth's atmosphere. Flying carpets in space – whatever next?

Our hero must dodge asteroids which streak past him. Touching these or any part of the atmosphere loses you points.

Then it's back to screen one. There are more meanies to contend with, and the occasional snake or spider popping along to see how things are. Life is much more difficult for Sinbad.

A unique feature of this game is its "kill/time matching intelligence". This policy allows you to proceed on your journey through space for a time period matched to your previous adventure. The game can be very difficult and frustrating on higher levels. But there is a surprise reward if you complete the journey.

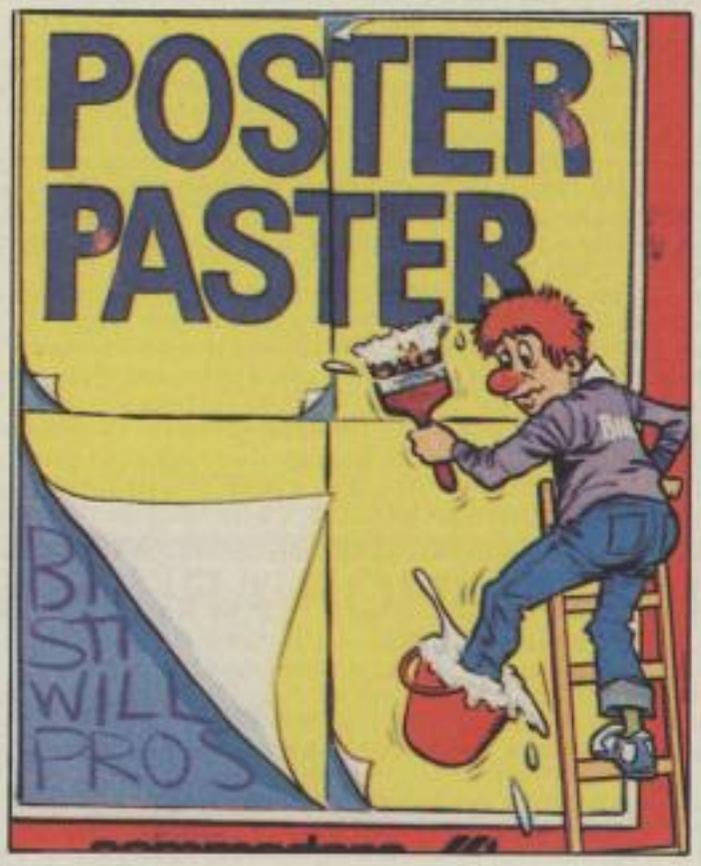
Graphics are both smooth and colourful. I particularly liked the *Star Trek* tune which plays on the second screen.

This is one of the better games to have been released from Virgin, and should keep your fingers on the keyboard for many an hour.

Waseem Asghar

Value 4
Graphics 3.5
Sound 3
Gameplay 4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



POSTER PASTER
Machine: Commodore 64 (+ joystick)
Supplier: Taskset
Price: £6.90 casstte, £9.99 disc
Type of game: skill/shoot 'em up

In this game you play the part of Bill Stickers, the billsticker. His job is to stick posters onto every hoarding in town.

As the game progresses the posters get bigger and so consist of more pieces. They are harder to put up.

But, as always, it is not quite as simple as that! The nasties in this game come in the form of wazzocks, drainbrains and gnurds, all of whose touch is fatal.

The worst part of the game is collecting the posters. This can take anything up to five minutes at first. Another thing to watch is the paste consistency, because it won't stick if it becomes too thick or too gooey! The instructions are not very explicit. I had to watch demo mode to get the hang of *Poster Paster*.

On the plus side, this game has good sound and excellent graphics, with a 3D effect although not actually in 3D. There is an options table which includes the choice of skill level and number of lives, as well as the chance for two people to play each other in turn.

I found *Poster Paster* really addictive, and easy to play after the initial frustrations caused by the lack of clear instructions. There is a turbo-loading facility and it is entirely joystick operated.

Nicholas Lord

Value 4
Sound 4.5
Graphics4.5
Playability 4

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

LAZY JONES
Machine: Commodore 64 (MSX soon)
Supplier: Terminal Software
Price: £7.95
Type of game: polycategorical

Lazy Jones is a mild-mannered janitor employed in a hotel. He has no desire to work – but is, as you'll see, anything but lazy.

You play Lazy Jones' part, running about a three-storey hotel. This you see from the side. The manager, the ghost of the previous manager, and a cleaning trolley are hot in pursuit. Lives are lost by contact with any of these.

There are eighteen rooms in all, connected by a very convincing lift complete with sliding doors. The manager patrols the top floor. His predecessor's featureless spirit takes the ground floor. And the trolley takes the middle floor. They are eluded by disappearing into lifts and through doors, or jumping.

Most rooms contain their own computer games, and are complete

with their own joystick and screen!

Lazy Jones walks into each room by himself. You then proceed to play a game in a game. This is particularly effective, since the room is in 3D perspective. You can't help remembering that how well you play ultimately governs Lazy Jones' progress.

A score and time-remaining are displayed on the mini-screen. Some rooms feature games which end when you are hit, while others pit you against the clock.

By the way, losing a life in a game in a room doesn't mean you lose one in the game itself!

After finishing the game, Jones walks out, and reappears in the hallway. Each games room can be entered only once. If lives remain after playing all the games, you may do so – but the going gets tough.

You can enter the broom cupboard or toilet whenever you like. This is particularly useful, as it gives you a few seconds to plan your method of escape.

There are many different games, all entertaining. A brief description of some of them follows.

Res Q: Propelled by a flying machine, you hover between jagged rock faces. Rescue your comrades, at a rate of ten points per head.

99 Red Balloons: With the sound of Nena's hit number in the air, pick up two flying balloons. These lift you up into the sky, where a girl is waiting. Having escaped a crossbow bolt, approach the girl, and a squeaky kiss is heard!

Star-Dust: This is very similar to Intellivision's *Astrosmash*, only more trying.

Wild Wafers: On a grid are revolving bouncing squares of the prison of General Zod in *Superman One* variety. Fire at them from a spaceship.

Jay Walk: A sub-standard mini-*Frogger*.

Wipe Out: Reminiscent of *Pong*.

Eggie Chuck: Avoid huge ostriches while collecting eggs.

The Wall: An arrow is on-screen. Using the joystick controller causes a trail of brickwork to be left behind it. Try to cover the screen.

The Turk: A turkey moves across the screen on a belt. You fire a fork at it, and if you stab it you earn points.

Outland: Like *Star-Dust*.

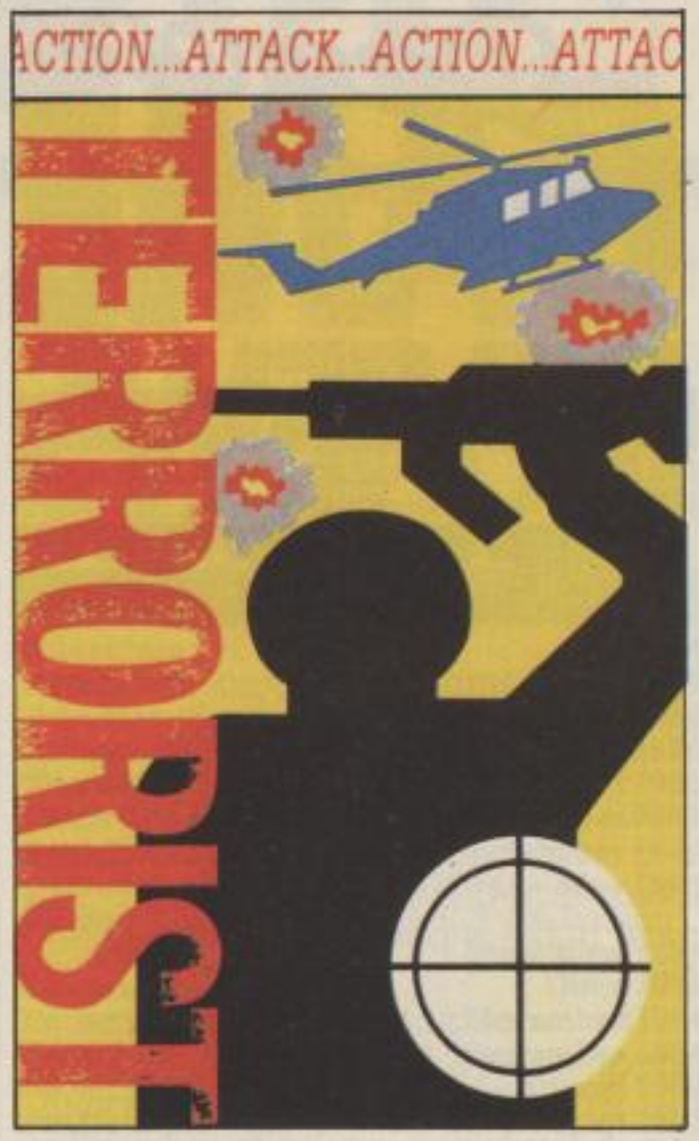
Laser Jones: Rows of merciless aliens à la *Space Invaders*.

The Hills Are Alive: A routine spaceship with side-on view, blasting away at alien mother ships.

Lazy Nightmare: Jones dreams about encounters with multiple managers. No user involvement!

Farooq Agha

Value 4
Graphics 3
Sound 3.5
Gameplay 4.5



TERRORIST
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Virgin Games
Price: £7.95
Type of game: strategy shoot 'em up

In *Terrorist*, you must protect a town from – of course – terrorists. As Red Leader you take your anti-terrorist squad to seek and destroy the enemy before they succeed in capturing key sites.

You are allocated 1,000,000 points at the start of the game. You lose points for wrong decisions, and gain them for correct ones.

After you have loaded the game, you see a map – which you must memorise quickly.

Your transport consists of a police car, boat and helicopter. The helicopter is used to refuel the car and boat, and as a gunship to combat the terrorists. To refuel the helicopter, there is a fuel dump in the centre of the screen. You are limited to three helicopters.

On the left side of the screen is a status board, showing locations vulnerable to attack. When under attack, the location symbol will flash and a tune is played. The music is always appropriate to the location – for example, can-can in the theatre and organs in the church.

The graphics are not up to the Commodore 64's usual standard. The sound is average, but sometimes overwhelming.

The idea of *Terrorist* is good, but it is not set out properly. There is too much to do at one time. For me, this did not hold lasting interest.

Deborah Lander

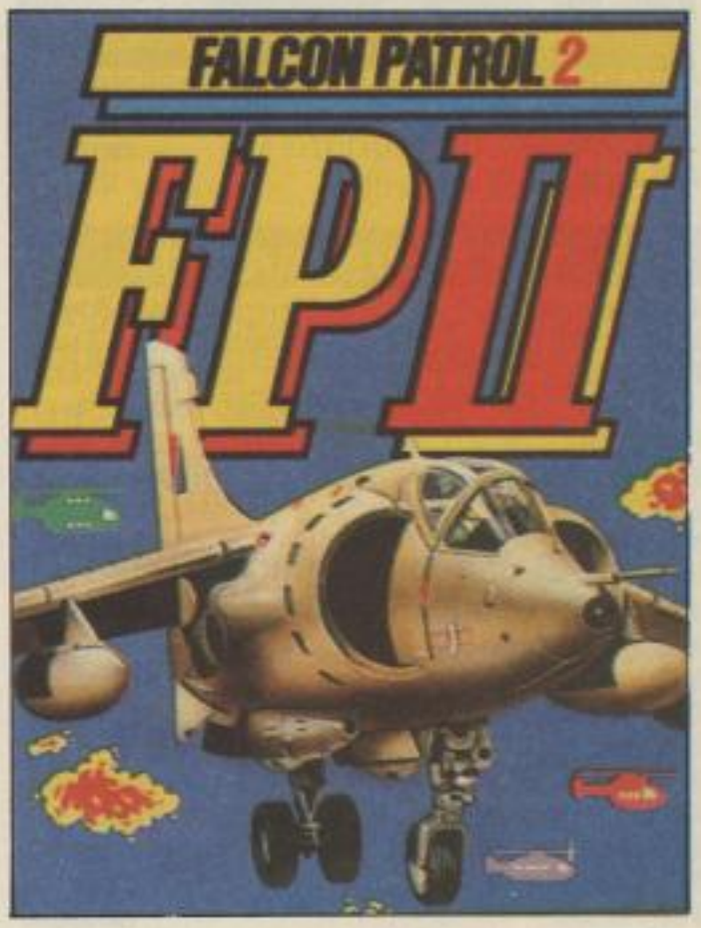
Value 2
Graphics 2
Sound 2.5
Gameplay 2

FALCON PATROL II
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Virgin Games
Price: £7.95
Type of game: skill/shoot 'em up

As you have already guessed from the title, this is the sequel to Virgin's highly acclaimed *Falcon Patrol*.

That game was good, but lacked variety; even the programmer later admitted that it wasn't very challenging. But *Falcon Patrol II* is very much so. The author has enhanced both sound and graphics, and added a few new features. These include air-to-ground missiles, anti-aircraft flak, helicopters and radar jammers.

The basic idea of *FPII* is simple. You must fly your VTOL aircraft over a nicely drawn, scrolling 3D landscape – blown-up cities, airfields, palm trees and pyramids – shooting



down the enemy helicopters.

There are three types of helicopter: the solo, the carrier and the gunship. The solos are the most deadly. They will hunt and kill you.

The next most deadly are the heavily armed gunships. These helicopters escort the unarmed carriers, preventing you from getting a good shot at them.

The final type, the carriers, are unarmed. But they are just as dangerous because they will fly close to the ground and drop anti-aircraft batteries. These will shoot you down if you're not careful.

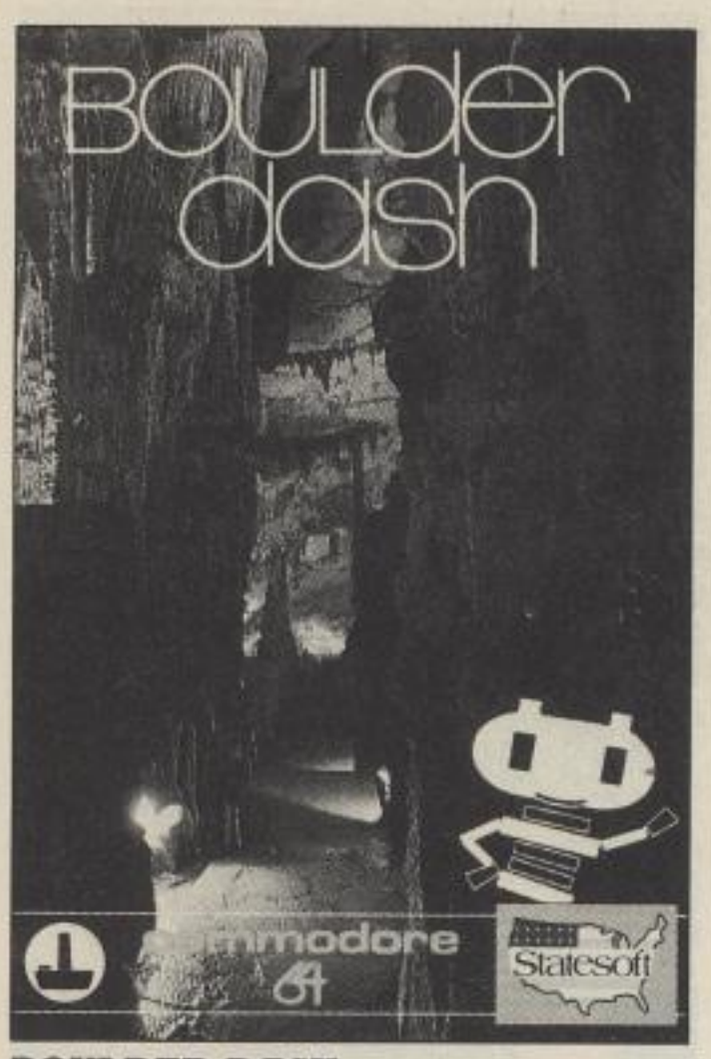
To make matters worse, you are armed with only a limited supply of missiles and fuel. Both are slowly replenished by carefully landing on one of the few landing pads – providing it hasn't been destroyed.

If you're looking for a good shoot 'em up, you won't be disappointed with *Falcon Patrol II*. It's a joy to play.

Gary Anderson

Value 4
Graphics 4
Sound 4
Gameplay 3

December GAME REVIEWS



BOULDER DASH
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: StateSoft
Price: £8.95
Type of game: arcade
Guide Rockford, an impatient character, through numerous underground caves collecting jewels. If you pause for more than a few seconds, Rockford will start tapping his foot and blinking at you.

Speed and quick thinking are the essence of survival. Once earth is removed from near a boulder, rocks start falling. Run or be buried alive.

Butterflies and fireflies add to the action in this multi-screen game. Each screen is sufficiently different to ensure you don't get tired of the same challenge.

Loading is about the quickest I've seen, with a title page onscreen to show loading is proceeding correctly. After a matter of seconds, you are ready to start.

Choose from four caves as your starting point. Set the difficulty level, and commence play.

In this game, *Manic Miner* meets *Dig-Dug*. Points are awarded dependant on time taken to complete each cave. If you are buried, the current cave is restarted.

Although not totally original, *Boulder Dash* is a game worth a place in anyone's collection.

JP Thompson

Value 4
Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FROG FACE
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Positive Image
Price: £5.95
Type of game: adventure
A fairly complex graphic adventure this, combining pure logic and commonsense problems.

The scenario is original – you have been zapped by the evil Meegan, and have had your handsome/pretty looks turned into those of a frog. You must make a potion to cure yourself. Not easy.

The vocabulary in *Frogface* is adequate, if a little brief. The lack of the word EXAMine was disappointing. A few clues can be found just by looking at the vocabulary list.

I have not found any bugs in this program, which is quite unusual for a large adventure. Needless to say, I have not completed it yet. 35% is my best score yet.

I would not recommend this as a first adventure. But it does seem to have enough complexity to give an intermediate adventurer a few sleepless nights.

Gary Buss

Value 3
Graphics 3
Sound 2
Gameplay 3.5

DOGFIGHT
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Slogger Software
Price: £6.95
Type of game: aerial combat
Dogfight is a game of aerial combat for two players. The game reminds me of the old Atari *Combat* cartridge. The less said about that, the better – but this version has hi-res aircraft and extra features such as lightning, hills and sun.

Controls are rotate left/right, fire, accelerate and brake. The object of the game is to shoot your opponent of the skies. Curse you, red baron!

The game has some unusual features, like being able to fly behind the sun or fly off the edge of the screen to reappear in the middle.

Overall, I was not impressed with this game. It is, maybe, up to the standards of *Gulpman*. So try before you buy.

Richard Henderson

Value 1
Graphics 0.5
Sound 1
Gameplay 1

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

DRAGONFIRE
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Cheetahsoft/Imagic
Price: £7.95
Type of game: skill
To look at the name of this game, you might be led to believe that it was a copy of an arcade laser disc game. Unfortunately, it is not.

You start the game outside a castle. You must cross a moat via a drawbridge. But it isn't easy. Some militant rebels mercilessly fire boulders at Prince William – that's you.

The graphics on this screen are fairly good, except for the character of Prince William. He is a small stick man who runs without moving his legs.

The gameplay is a cross between the first screen on *Hunchback* and the third on *Jungle Fever*. You must duck and jump boulders coming from the castle's catapults.

On the second screen, what appears to be a dragon is breathing fire at you as you try to collect all the items on the screen. These include goblets, viking helmets and lanterns.

The graphics on this screen are adequate, but not stunning. The gameplay can be addictive, but only if you try really hard.

The game has only two screens, which are repeated faster and faster each time. *Dragonfire* is not a bad game, but has something missing.

Sean Maddalena

Value 3
Graphics 2
Sound 1
Gameplay 3

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Note: Issues 1, 2 & 3 were each complete listings of all the games available for Atari VCS, Intellivision, Coleco and Vectrex video games. Many of the reviews were reprinted with amendments from issue to issue. Issue 3, Winter 1983, remains the most comprehensive listing of games for these machines.

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December GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MOONSWEEPER

Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Cheetahsoft/Imagic
Price: £7.95
Type of game: sci-fi shoot 'em up

You command the moonsweeper, Raider. Your task is a deadly seek-and-find mission for stranded lunar pioneers.

There are four moons to search, each guarded by hostile base carriers, short-range interceptors and the fatal death towers.

To search a moon, you must land on it while destroying or avoiding stray meteors. Once there, you use your skill and radar to detect your fellow pioneers.

All the while, you skim along the lunar surface at the maximum speed you dare. You can destroy all hostile forces, but the interceptors shoot back. Watch out! You may kill your own men.

Once you have collected six pioneers, your first search is nearly complete. You must navigate through the accelerator rings to gather blast speed for take-off. Then you must choose another moon, and it's back to battle stations.

The action is fast and furious, with four difficulty levels to contend with.

The graphics are good but simple. Good moon movement gives the feeling of speed; and when you pass through the moon rings the moon moves away very effectively. Then it's a return to the stray meteors, with the sun shining in the distance.

You start with four lives. There is a two-player option, but no high-score facility. *Moonsweeper* has a sound on/off button.

You can use Kempston, Cheetah RAT, ZX Interface II and cursor clip-ons.

Christopher Bullett

Value 3
Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 3

THE PYRAMID

Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Fantasy Software
Price: N/A
Type of game: arcade adventure

The Pyramid is a pure arcade game, which can be controlled by either the keyboard or the leading makes of joystick. I found the keys a little difficult to master, and would advise you to use a joystick if possible.

With the cassette, you get a long and amusing story about Ziggy and his exploratory capsule. He is on a quest to solve the ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything for which the answer is 42. This was discovered many æons ago by the greatest computer ever: Deep Thought. Hang on! This sounds like Douglas Adam's trilogy which started with *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*.

Ziggy must battle his way through a vast pyramid of 120 chambers on fifteen levels. The main object of the game is to reach the base level, level fifteen, as quickly as possible.

As Ziggy moves from chamber to chamber, he discovers secret numbers in each. Not all the numbers are obvious. You must puzzle out the missing secret numbers by their relationship to other numbers on that level. This is not easy.

And to make life more difficult, each chamber is guarded by some very weird exotic aliens. Contact with these aliens is deadly. But your exploratory capsule, with its defensive shield, should protect you.

To move from chamber to chamber, you must collect energised crystals. These descend from the top of the screen after a certain number of aliens have been atomised. Drop them through the force fields guarding the next chamber. This is quite easy on the top levels, but gets more difficult as you progress downwards through the pyramid.

The faster you move from one chamber to another, the higher your score is. If you score over 30,000 your high score will be coded. You can then send it to Fantasy Software and maybe earn a place in the top 1,000 scores published every six months.

Once you get the hang of *The Pyramid*, it becomes quite addictive. The graphics, too, are good, with a smooth character movement.

Dave Camp

Value 4
Graphics 4
Sound N/A
Gameplay 3.5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PI-IN 'ERE

Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Automata
Price: £6.00
Type of game: arcade

This game is based on the popular arcade game, *Dig-Dug*. It features Burt, the star of previous Automata games.

Burt has been miniaturised, and injected into a computer's RAM. His mission is to track down the elusive "big bug". He does this by tunnelling through each area of RAM and collecting all the objects in each memory location.

Your job is to help Burt avoid contact with the various minor bugs. Each has its own degree of intelligence. The species include red bugs, white speed bugs, green grabbers, and magenta menaces. You can kill the baddies by passing under a revolving EDIT key. This will cause it to fall, hopefully on a nasty and not you.

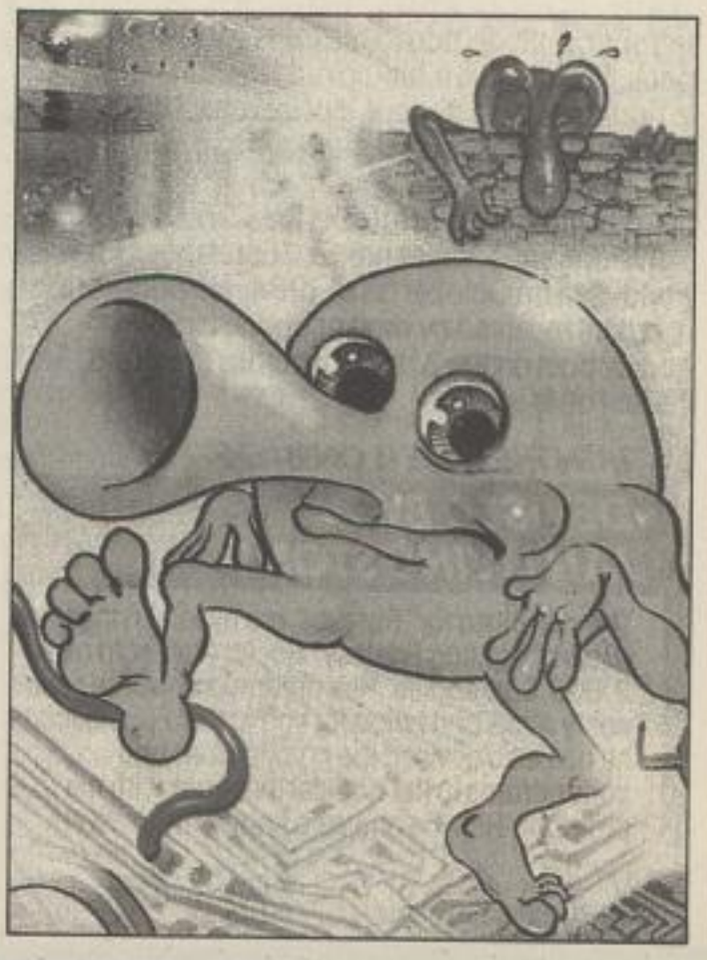
The graphics are very well done, almost up to the Ultimate standard.

Playing the game proved to be slightly difficult as the baddies seem to be able to kill you from a distance at times. Apart from this, the game is easy to control.

All in all, a worthwhile addition to anyone's game collection. *Pi-In 'Ere* is one of Automata's best.

Steve Wetherill

Value 4
Graphics 4
Sound 2 – including music on B side!
Gameplay 3



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Please order a copy of TV Gamer magazine for me every month.

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ZIM SALA BIM
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Melbourne House
Price: £9.95
Type of game: graphic adventure

Zim Sala Bim is an addictive adventure which makes good use of 3D animated graphics. Well, it's from the same house that brought us *The Hobbit*.

In this game, you take the role of the last able-bodied man left in the village of Zim Sala Bim. The village has been ransacked by the sultan's hordes. And it's up to you – again – to save the day, this time by recovering the village gold from the sultan's bedroom.

You must then locate the secret cave, and return the treasure to the village elders.

This task is far from easy, as you must contend with bands of nomadic thieves and the hostile palace guards.

The screen is split into two sections: a graphical representation of your location at the top, and a text window at the bottom. It is the graphics which are the outstanding feature of this game.

You can move your character left, right, backwards and forwards by using the keyboard or a joystick.

His speed can be altered by pressing one of the numeric keys from 1 to 9. As you move your character, the screen scrolls smoothly right or left.

Any objects you find are then pictured onscreen. They can be manipulated by two-word text input, such as GET ROPE. Command words can be abbreviated to two letters.

Zim Sala Bim has some good music, with a suitable Arabian sound. The music varies for each location, which adds a good deal of atmosphere to the game.

Zim Sala Bim is good value and very enjoyable. My only quibble is the amount of time my input commands were greeted with the response "I don't understand". But I suppose that must occur in every adventure until you get used to its vocabulary.

Finally, the program loads in under three minutes, since it incorporates the Pavlova fast load.

Paul Serbert

Value 4
Graphics4
Sound 4
Gameplay 4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

STRANGELOOP
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Virgin Games
Price: £5.95
Type of game: arcade/adventure

On trying to load this for the eighth time, after it insisted on crashing, I was about to give up. It loaded on the ninth try. After playing for some time, I wished it hadn't. To put it politely, it is utter rubbish.

The game is basically a cross between *Jet-Set Willy* (Software Projects) and *Jet-Pac* (Ultimate). These two excellent games have combined to make this a game which has garish colours, very poor sound and dreadfully hard controls. The only novel idea with this game is the super-fast loading technique called Flashload.

I cannot recommend this game to anyone. The above games by Software and Ultimate are much better.

Lee Braithwaite

Value 1
Graphics 2
Sound 0
Gameplay 1

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

HUSTLER
Machine: Spectrum 16/48K
MSX and Commodore 64 versions available
Supplier: Bubble Bus
Price: £6.99
Type of game: skill

Hustler is a computer version of pool. It was originally written for the Commodore 64, and was well received amongst 64 owners. Unfortunately, I doubt that the Spectrum version will be as successful, despite its added features.

The game incorporates six versions of pool for one or two players. The computer keeps track of the scores and acts as referee.

The player's cue is represented by a cross, which can be moved around the table using the keyboard or a joystick.

Once the cross is in the required position, the player can choose between four different spins, the strength of the spin, and the strength of the shot. Then press fire – it sends the cue ball moving in the direction of the camera.

Positioning the cross is very difficult. This is because of the poor choice of control keys and the speed at which it moves across the table. The movement of the balls is also unrealistic. For example, occasionally the balls speed up after decelerating.

The graphics are also disappointing, with the balls being represented by numbered black circles against a white table. The game proved difficult to load. Loading was successful only on the third attempt.

One redeeming feature of the game is the introductory tune. But there is very little sound during gameplay.

David Liddle

Value 3
Graphics 2
Sound 3
Gameplay 2

"Leaves the Atari, Drag
and Lynx f

Choosing a home computer is a bit like playing a video game. The more you play, the better you get. So you'd expect people who spend their working life choosing computers to be pretty good at the game. Quick to shoot down a fault. Pleased when they find an improvement.

Recently Which Micro? and What Micro? tested the Spectravideo SV 318. Here's what they had to say:

"Every home computer coming on the market tends to be hailed as revolutionary. For once this really has to be true with the Spectravideo SV 318."

"The first cheap, high performance computer..."

"Double precision numbers . . . are ideal for companies with turnovers under £999,999,999,999.99."

Spectravideo SV 318: Memory – 32K ROM expandable to 96K, 32K RAM expandable to 144K: **Keyboard** – calculator type, 71 keys, 10 function keys, built in joy stick/cursor control: **Graphics** – 16 colours, 256 x 192 high resolution graphics, 32 sprites: **Sound** – 3 channels, 8 octaves per channel: **CP/M* compatibility** – over 3000 existing software packages: **Storage** – cassette drive, 256K disc drive capacity: **Suggested retail price** – £186.

Spectravideo SV 328: Memory – 32K ROM expandable to 96K, 80K RAM expandable to 144K: **Keyboard** – full word processor type, 87 keys, 10 function keys, built in cursor control: **Graphics** – 16 colours, 256 x 192 high resolution graphics, 32 sprites: **Sound** – 3 channels, 8 octaves per channel: **CP/M* compatibility** – over 3000 existing software packages: **Storage** – cassette drive, 256K disc drive capacity: **Suggested retail price** – £262.

A full range of peripherals are also available.

** Which Micro Hardware Review – Spectravideo SV-318

*® CP/M is a registered trade mark of Digital Research Inc

a gon, Commodore 64
k for dead." Which Micro? Dec 83. **

"...a far better job with its keyboard than anybody else using soft keys."

"...most people will notice how easy it is to produce graphics with the Basic."

"This is a BBC class machine."

"As a computer for the enthusiast it is well nigh perfect."

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GHOST RIDER
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Positive Image
Price: N/A
Type of game: bike
The package says 100% machine code, but this game is also 100% not very good.

Basically, you play the part of a maniac on a push bike at the top of the screen. You must race about the split levels collecting objects. To defy you in your quest is a bunch of static – a bad representation of animated objects.

Again, the packaging describes the game as "real arcade action combined with strategy and adventure". Yes, there's action – about as much as you would find on the average wet Sunday afternoon in a power cut. And yes, there's strategy – if you're a gorilla. But where's the adventure?

To put it in a simple nutshell: don't buy it.

Matthew Harvis

Value 1
Graphics 2
Sound 1
Gameplay 1

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ALCATRAZ HARRY
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Mastertronic
Price: £1.99
Type of game: maze
You must wander round a twenty by ten grid, collecting thirty items. You must then dump those items in a compound. Pick a safe route to the north wall. There, a hole in the fence has been conveniently ignored by the ever-watchful guards.

December GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

If you are expecting machine guns, searchlights and sirens, forget it. You must dodge a bunch of static dogs and guards, collect a few bits and plans, then walk out. I can't remember Clint Eastwood finding it that easy in the film.

If you run into the same guard twice, it's curtains.

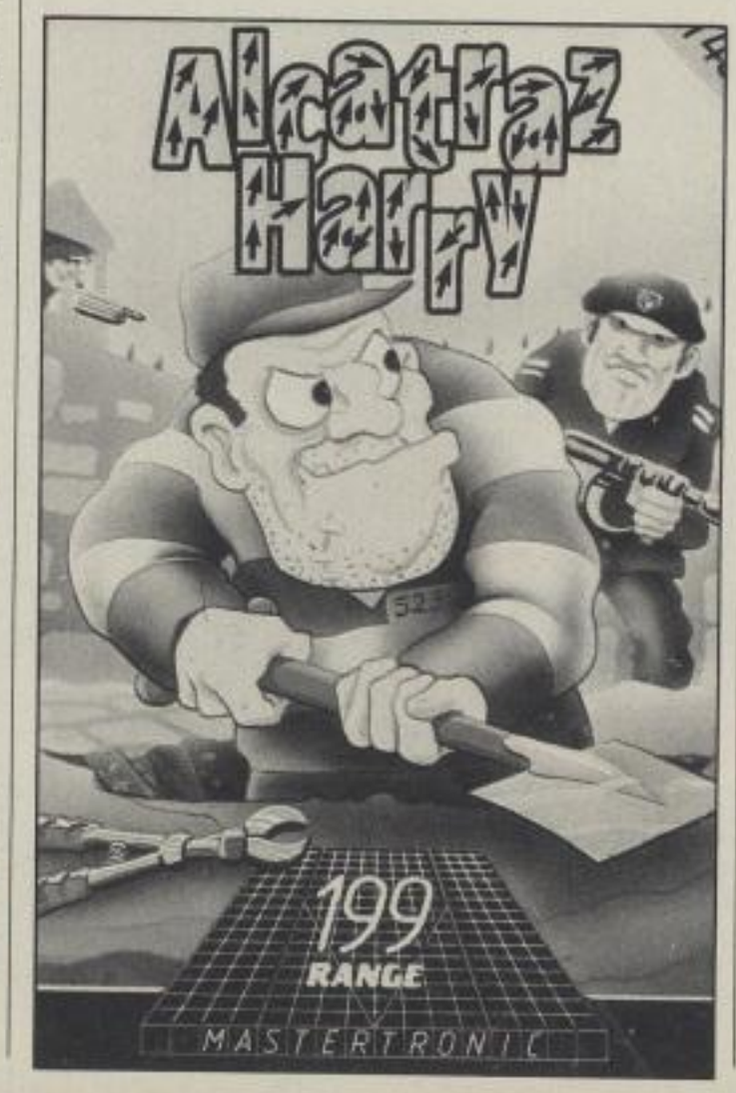
The only things you need to do to escape is to find various objects, then some secret files hidden around the bottom of one of the grilles scattered throughout the grid. This is not very hard, because you are told which sector they are in at the beginning.

Why don't I like *Alcatraz Harry*? It's written in Basic and lacks both speed and smoothness of scrolling. The animation is some of the worst I've seen. Harry moves like a lead weight.

And, when forking out your £1.99, consider the other things you could buy: a trip to the cinema, twenty arcade games, ten good ones, two issues of *TV Gamer*, half a good game, or ten Cokes.

Matthew Jarvis

Value 1
Graphics 1.5
Sound 0.5
Gameplay 1



THE PERILS OF BEAR GEORGE
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Cheetahsoft
Price: £6.95
Type of game: skill
This reasonable offering from Cheetahsoft puts you in the shoes of a great bear called George. He must prepare for hibernation.

The first scene shows George in his natural surroundings, the woods. It is his task to eat as many apples as possible so that he can fatten himself up for the approaching winter.

George must catch the apples as they fall with his mouth. This proves difficult to begin with. But once you have developed the correct technique, it is simple.

Occasionally, a squirrel appears from the branches and drops an acorn. Should this hit George, he is momentarily stunned.

During the windfall, George must watch his weight carefully. If he is greedy, he will develop acute indigestion and explode, losing a life. On the other hand, if George doesn't tip the balance, he will starve to death.

A nice graphical touch is the way in which George fattens as he gains weight, with his brisk walk turning into a slow plod.

Next, George progresses to the ski slopes in search of his winter hideout. He must also dodge the oncoming skiers who try to knock him down. The mountains and clouds in the background have been well drawn and look quite impressive. But it is too simple to dodge the skiers and enter the cave.

Now that George is in the cave, he must find his sleeping quarters. He must also dodge the lethal spiders suspended from the cave roof. This scene is possibly the most disappointing, as it is difficult to distinguish between the different objects. Cheetahsoft could have chosen better colours. Once again, I found it too easy to guide George past the spiders and into his sleeping quarters.

Finally, if George has not lost too much weight on his ventures, he should be able to survive the winter months ready for the next season. As George dreams away the winter, a calendar above him flicks through the months to the following spring.

The game caters for most popular joysticks, and the keyboard can be redefined to suit the individual. Each scene offers a different sound track which can be turned off as desired.

Although *The Perils Of Bear George* was not my cup of tea, it will undoubtedly appeal to some young gamers.

David Liddle

Value 3
Graphics 3
Sound 3
Gameplay 3

As monitored by *TV Gamer* readers

TOP 20 video and computer games

POSITION	NAME	MANUFACTURER	SYSTEMS
1 (5)	DECATHLON	(Activision)	c, h, n
2 (10)	FULL THROTTLE	(Micromega)	j
3 (3)	PITFALL II	(Activision)	c, h, j, n
4 (–)	DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON	(Ocean)	c, j
5 (2)	ZAXXON	(CBS/US Gold)	b, c, f, g, j, n
6 (7)	SABRE WULF	(Ultimate)	j
7 (–)	MONTY MOLE	(Gremlin Graphics)	c, j
8 (1)	JET SET WILLY	(Software Projects)	c, j
9 (9)	POLE POSITION	(Atari)	a, c, f, j, n
10 (4)	BEACH-HEAD	(US Gold)	c, j
11 (–)	MICRO OLYMPICS	(Data Base)	a
12 (8)	PITFALL	(Activision)	b, c, f, g, h, n
13 (16)	VALHALLA	(Legend)	c, j
14 (11)	RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK	(Atari)	n
15 (13)	TRASHMAN	(New Generation)	c, j
16 (12)	DONKEY KONG	(CBS/Atari)	b, f, g, n
17 (–)	FLIGHT PATH 737	(Anirog)	c
18 (–)	JACK AND THE BEANSTALK	(Thor)	j
19 (14)	RIVER RAID	(Activision)	b, c, f, g, h, n
20 (–)	PSYTRON	(Beyond)	j

*Numbers in brackets indicate last month's position

a Acorn BBC computer b CBS Colecovision/Adam c Commodore 64 d Dragon e Acorn Electron f Atari 800 XL g Intellivision h MSX j Spectrum n Atari 2600 VCS

...and the top 10 arcade games

1 (1)	STAR WARS	(Atari)	
2 (2)	TRACK & FIELD	(Konami/Kaito)	
3 (3)	DRAGON'S LAIR	(Cinematronics)	
4 (4)	POLE POSITION	(Atari/Namco)	
5 (6)	M.A.C.H.3	(Mylstar)	
6 (7)	BUCK ROGERS	(Sega)	
7 (8)	MR DO	(Universal)	
8 (–)	ASTRON BELT	(Sega)	
9 (9)	TURBO	(Sega)	
10 (–)	FIREFOX	(Atari)	

TOP GAMES OF THE MONTH

You are invited to vote for your favourite screen game and your favourite arcade game. But remember to vote only for those games that you own, have rented or have played a great deal.

To register your vote, use the reply page in this issue. One lucky voter will receive a free year's subscription to TV Gamer (decided by draw.)

Last month's winner: Barry Gidman, Pontefract, West Yorkshire

TOP SCORE

1	(5)	**DECATHLON** (TVG proven)	**10,545** Jeremy Wellard
2	(10)	**FULL THROTTLE** (Micromega)	no claim made
3	(3)	**PITFALL II** (TVG proven)	**199,000** Alex Mitchell/M. Churcher
4	(–)	**DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON** (TVG claimed)	**475,560** Gary Smillie
5	(2)	**ZAXXON** (TVG claimed)	**3,350,100** Christopher Brady
6	(7)	**SABRE WULF** (Ultimate)	no claim made
7	(–)	**MONTY MOLE** (Gremlin Graphics)	no claim made
8	(1)	**JET SET WILLY** (Software Projects)	**83 objects** Ross Coleman/Cameron Else
9	(9)	**POLE POSITION** (TVG claimed)	**721,000** Fergal McConville
10	(4)	**BEACH HEAD** (US Gold)	no claim made
11	(–)	**MICRO OLYMPICS** (Data Base)	no claim made
12	(8)	**PITFALL** (Activision)	**114,000** David Ross/Richard Varnie
13	(16)	**VALHALLA** (Legend)	no claim made
14	(11)	**RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** (TVG claimed)	**25 points** Brian Bell
15	(13)	**TRASHMAN** (New Generation)	no claim made
16	(12)	**DONKEY KONG** (TVG claimed)	**8,796,600** Ian Morrish
17	(–)	**FLIGHT PATH 737** (Anirog)	no claim made
18	(–)	**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK** (Thor)	no claim made
19	(14)	**RIVER RAID** (Activision)	**1,000,000** Gavin Davidson
20	(–)	**PSYTRON** (Beyond)	no claim made

TV Gamer invites readers to send in their high scores for any screen game. A ***claimed*** score merely needs to state your name, game title, system (eg Atari home computer system, Spectrum, VCS, etc) and claimed score.

A ***proven*** score will require photographic evidence, but will take precedence over previous claimed scores. We suggest using a SLR auto-exposure camera on a tripod with cable release, timed at 1/4 second. Games which can be "clocked" (ié the score reaches a maximum and then returns to zero) will count only as claimed scores. Additionally, games which present short-cuts to high scoring (eg ***Space Invaders***, which can be made to shoot two missiles at a time) will also only be accepted as claimed scores.

Send your scores to *TV Gamer, Top Score Desk, 187 Oxford Street, London W1.*

Hi there, gamers. Nice of you to drop in to the club pages – no, don't turn the page. Let me say my bit before you fall about laughing at the Gamepaws cartoon (!).

MSX has finally arrived from the land of the rising Sony (couldn't resist that one). What are your views on the system and its specification? Do you share Uncle Clive's view that MSX is holding new technology back, thanks to an outdated eight-bit processor? Or do you think that Mr S. is just worried that it will eat away at sales of the Speccy and the Quantum Lurch? Personally, I would have thought that any form of standardisation in the industry must be a good thing for the consumer in the long run. If you agree with me or wish to defend Sir Clive's stance, write in without delay (and beat the Christmas rush).

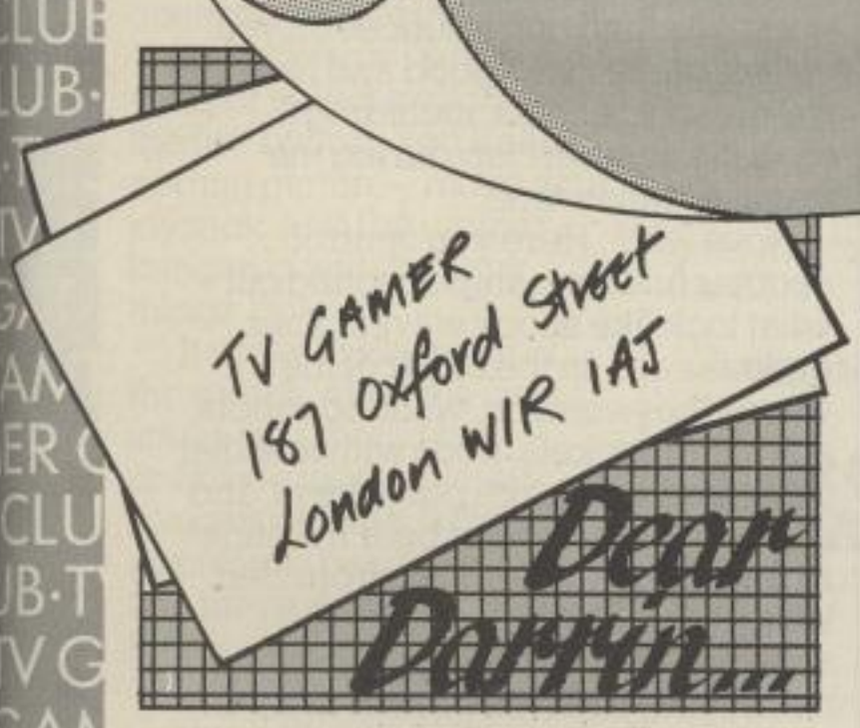
As the yuletide season is fast approaching, we've decided to do a TVG Christmas/New Year card competition (calm down now!). All you need do is design a wonderful Christmas and New Year Greetings card – and say who you would like it sent to. Suggestions: Sir Clive Sinclair, Jack Tramiel, Nolan Bushnell, Dave Harvey, Jeff Minter, Cousin Reggie. . . . .

The only real rules are that the cards must suit the person in question down to the ground. The ones we find the funniest and most apt (and artistic, of course) will be printed in the February issue. All those we print will receive a free year's subscription to your favourite magazine, TVG!

You've got until 25th December, so get scribbling. Don't forget to enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you want your masterpiece returned.

Have a great Christmas – hope your stockings are filled with lots of game goodies.

Darrin Williamson



NO FUN IN SWITZERLAND

On a recent visit to the skiing resort of Zermatt in Switzerland, I had a look around quite a lot of the local shops to see what games existed.

The only system to be found was the Coleco. This was in an electrical shop and the only game for it was *Turbo*.

I could find only one arcade and this was in a restaurant which had only two machines. One of these was a *Defender*-type game and the other was a driving game. Both had unpronounceable (and unspellable) German names.

Craig Loweth,
Rowney Green, Birmingham

WHAT A DRAGON!

I must complain about the Dragon games you review. They mostly seem to be the worst available, while games like *Zaxxon*, *Pooyan*, *Cashman*, *Mudpies*, etc, are ignored. They may be Tandy games that work perfectly on the Dragon, but world-beating games such as these should not be overlooked.

A Gibson,
Lees, Oldham

We simply review the games that we are sent for review. In any case, there are now so many games that we review them on one machine – and recommend you hold onto the review until the game is on your system. Zaxxon, for example, was covered in depth in the October issue of TVG.

DOOM FOR DOOMDARK

I bought *Lords of Midnight* two weeks ago and defeated Doomdark on my fifth attempth. I have now defeated him four more times – out of four attempts.

For anyone frustrated by Doomdark's apparent impregnability, here's how to defeat him.

First some tips:

1. Wherever Luxor goes, Morkin goes for protection.
2. Citadels and keeps can be discerned from far away by the fact that they have flat tops.
3. Avoid minor confrontations, as it saps strength.
4. When Corleth and Rorthron stop for the night, hide them. They are then safe.
5. Use the map – it's invaluable.

After picking up Shadows, send Luxor south to get Gard. Then send him with Morkin and Xajorkith, picking up minor lords on his way.

Send Rorthron and Corleth east to get Blood and Shimeril. They should be sent south east to get Dawn and Morning, while Rorthron and Corleth are sent east to pick up Marakith, Kumar, Ithron and the Utarg – the fiercest of them all. They should all then go south west to Xajorkith, picking up Dregrim on the way and several minor lords.

Everyone should be at Xajorkith usually by the fifteenth or sixteenth day – quickly accomplished by the avalanche effect. Now wait.

Doomdark will send thousands and thousands to destroy you. But, as

they come in an even stream, there is no need to move. By the thirty-fifth to fortieth day, up to 55,000 of his troops should be lost, compared to about 1,000 of your troops.

After a five- to ten-day rest, push all your forces north to the citadel of Dawn. Take this and then citadel-hop all the way up to Ithron. You should have 25,000 troops there. Morkin must go ahead by two days here – it is best to send a minor lord, as well.

After another two-day rest, push north west to the mountains of Death, then west till Ushgarak is south west. Have a two day rest, making sure Morkin is north of the tower of Doom, then go to battle.

Because Morkin is taking most of the ice fear, Morning, as usual, will not work. But don't worry, victory is imminent.

As dawn unfolds you will have taken Ushgarak. But no final victory sign will be shown until you move all your forces into Ushgarak. Then a rather unimpressive notice comes up: "Ushgarak has fallen. Victory to the free!"

I wish I had a printer, but I don't think the prize could cover the cost of paper. About 10,000 copy pushes should do it!

Iwould like to add that this game has the best graphics and most interesting format of any I have ever played.

James Noble,
West Runton, Norfolk

GUIDE TO THE HOBBIT

I have searched in vain for a copy of *Guide to the Hobbit* and do not know the address of Melbourne House. Could you please tell me where I can buy one?

How do you escape from the goblin's dungeon – the one with horrible blue doors, walls, a pile of sand, and a window which I can't climb up to even when I tie the rope to it? When I typed in HELP, it said "A window should be no problem to a thief with friends". This didn't help me in the slightest.

How do I cross the black enchanted river? I can't jump across or swim, as that kills you. When I pressed HELP this time, it said "Boats can help". But I can't find one.

I have pondered on these for a while and am thoroughly confused. Help!

Dexter,
Bamber Bridge, Lancashire

The address to write to for Guide to the Hobbit is: Melbourne House, Castle Yard House, Castle Yard, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6TF (tel: 01-940 6064).

To get out of the goblin's dungeon, you must DIG SAND. This will reveal a trap door. Then BREAK TRAP DOOR. This could take several turns but eventually the door will break. Finally, TAKE KEY: you will find a small curious key.

If Thorin is with you he may well take the key for himself as it belongs to his father, Thrain. To leave the dungeon, you must be carried through a window by one of the other characters. This can be done only if you are not carrying too much. So get rid of any grub you have on you beforehand.

Then wait if no other character is present. Repeat until one enters. SAY TO THORIN "CARRY ME". Gandalf could also do the same if Thorin isn't there. SAY TO THORIN (OR GANDALF) "OPEN WINDOW". SAY TO THORIN (OR GANDALF) "WEST". You'll now be taken into the dark winding passage.

To find the boat you must first THROW ROPE ACROSS. Keep doing this until the rope lands in the boat on the other side of the river. PULL ROPE: the boat should glide across. CLIMB INTO BOAT: the boat will move by itself and carry you to the east bank. Then CLIMB OUT.

NOW TO BELGIUM!

While I was in Belgium this summer I didn't see any computer shops. But there were lots of arcades, and I visited quite a few of them.

Once inside, I was greeted by games that I had never seen (though other arcade addicts may have). They included *Rope Man*, *Arabian*, *Zippy Race*, *SF-X*, *Nova 2001* and *Hopper Robo*. Just for you, I have a description of each of them (each game is joystick controlled).

Rope Man: you are an explorer clad in shorts, shirt and panama hat. The idea is to get to the top of the screen by climbing up the ledges. Meanwhile, you are collecting eggs and two golden feathers of the phoenix which is sitting patiently for you to come and jump on its back. Stopping you are dragons and cavemen which come out of the doorways in the walls on the sides of the ledges and a bird which flies in a wrap-round at the top of the screen and stabs you in the back.

You are armed with a rope for climbing and a light for blinding your enemies.

The dragons kill you by walking into you. But the cavemen can jump on your head and climb ropes to knock you off.

I found this game addictive, with cute graphics and colour, and harder screens.

Arabian: You are an Arabian prince in a Turkish suit and turban. You have to collect lettered oil pots to save your princess.

The letters are three As, one R, one B, one I and one N. If you collect them in the order of the word ARABIAN, you get a bonus.

Trying to stop you are pink mutants and blue birds. You die on contact with them. you can get your own back by kicking them off the screen.

When your man gets the last oil pot, he jumps up and brandishes a sword.

Zippy Race: This shows a bird's-eye view of a motorbike (you) riding up a road towards such American cities as New York, Denver and Las Vegas.

In the first part, you are driving up a freeway dodging Mini Metro-like cars, puddles, rocks and cacti.

The second part shows you speeding up a straight road with city monuments at the end of it. Cars are shooting towards you; if you avoid them, you disappear up the road.

Nice graphics again. I liked touches such as the flashing lights on the way to Las Vegas and the Statue of Liberty waving her torch if you safely make it to New York.

SF-X: You are a futuristic ship with a single laser that sometimes turns into a double-barrelled laser. This game reminds me of *Defender*. It fires in much the same way. And some of the enemies act the same, including the main baddie, a yellow and orange yakking skull which jiggles around and bounces on you.

This game looks good and has great sound effects, including a realistic thunderclap during the demonstration time.

Nova 2001: Here you control another futuristic ship shooting out what look like shock waves. Your enemies are, in the order of the waves they come in, walking robots, spiralling rockets, pods with feet that go up and down like piano keys, and spinning spheres that bear a distinct resemblance to Remotes from *Star Wars*.

When an enemy has been destroyed, it leaves behind a small square bunk with a flashing number on it. Collect this for extra points.

Hopper Robo: In this you are a chubby red robot trying to knock numbered boxes down to two conveyor belts. Both of these lead to what I think is a hole in the centre. To get to them, your robot has to climb on platforms, giant cogs and giant springs.

Stopping you are blue robots, green springs and maybe a few other gremlins which, on contact, make you stiffen and fall to the conveyor belts at the bottom of the screen, ending up in the hole.

I think this game is reasonably good and has bright, colourful, detailed graphics. But I also think it is rather pointless. Why do you have to knock down the boxes?

Andrew Tilley,
Ramsbottom, Lancs

EASTER-EGGS

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

This is the fourth time I have written in, with no luck so far. I would like to thank *TV Gamer* for the Insight on *Jet Set Willy*. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Its prequel, *Manic Miner*, is also brilliant. I have got as far as level six only – but a friend has given me a clue on how to get onto higher levels without going through the whole game.

You type 6031769 in some way so that a picture of a boot comes up onscreen. Then you press 6 together with any numbers up to 6.

Do any TVG readers know more about this?

James Eagleton
Sidcup, Kent

SPRING EGGS

I am writing to congratulate you on the last issue of TVG – tons of new easter eggs. I've now found some other ones on the Atari VCS.

In *Kangaroo*, press the reset or select switch, then the fire button. You'll see a normal picture – move your joystick, and the mother kangaroo will do funny things.

If you quickly let go of the switch when the game starts, you should be unable to move mother kangaroo until a falling apple kills her. Then you can move with your next life.

In *Q*Bert*, you can get Coily off the top of the pyramid this way. Go to the very top of the pyramid, and wait for Coily to come up to the diagonal cube next to it. Quickly move down the square, about the centre of the screen, to the row second from the bottom. If timed correctly, Coily should go off the screen and you should earn yourself 500 points.

The second egg I found only once in *Q*Bert*. I was 20,000 points on the sixth or seventh screen. I took a certain route, landed on a certain square, and found myself unable to move for a while. But my score kept going up without me moving. I moved when my score reached 80,000!

I have found a way to make Brutus go through the screen in *Popeye*. As soon as you start the game, go down the centre ladder and move just in front of Brutus. Position yourself just so far that he doesn't fire any bullets. Then make him follow you to the end of the screen. He should then turn round.

Move down to the bottom level to collect the sinking hearts. It will strike you that some sort of interference is erupting. Fear not: it's just Brutus passing through the screen.

If you jump a barrel in *Donkey Kong* when it is near the end of a girder, the barrel will disappear.

M Starkey
Whitehaven, Cumbria

ARCADIA'S CATCH 22

How about this then? Score more than 600 points on Arcadia's *Escape From The Mindmaster*, and he calls you a cheat. I didn't – honest!

Raymond Graves
Bridgend, Mid-Glam

Above: Raymond Graves is caught in a Catch-22 situation

SMURF IT

I think I've found some bugs on Colecovision and Atari games.

Once, the title screen of *Smurf* was followed by continuous noise. Then I got a lot of coloured hi-res graphics.

In response to Nicholas Schouten's letter on the *Smurf* bug (TVG, May), I tried this and my score went back to zero, my man disappeared, two funny symbols appeared next to the smurf at the top of the screen, and my energy dissolved. This was on game three.

Also, on game four, if you move it backwards and forwards on the same background, you get 919,500 points and a square-on-legs symbol!

In *Venture*, move forwards and backwards, in and out of rooms, on game three. When you are out of the room, a green hall monster will appear from nowhere and kill you. This happens on games one to four.

Also, although it's wrong to do it, if you flick the on/off switch on the Atari, weird things happen. The players emerge from a tunnel in *Pete's Soccer*. You get dots in *River Raid*. You get Dave Barry's room in *Raiders* (TVG, May). You get bushes on legs in *Jungle Hunt*.

The biggest surprise of all is that my Atari still works!

Martyn Disney
Walthamstow, London

MORE ON VCS

Plug in a *Tutankham* cartridge, and you can have continuous play. Just follow these steps.

Score a few hundred points, and lose all your lives.

Press the select button, and keep it pressed.

Press the reset button, and keep it pressed.

Let go of the reset button.

You will see yourself with the same number of points in the same area of the maze. You will have no lives or laser flashes. Lose a life, and your three lives and flashes are restored.

Darren Chaplin
Camberley, Surrey

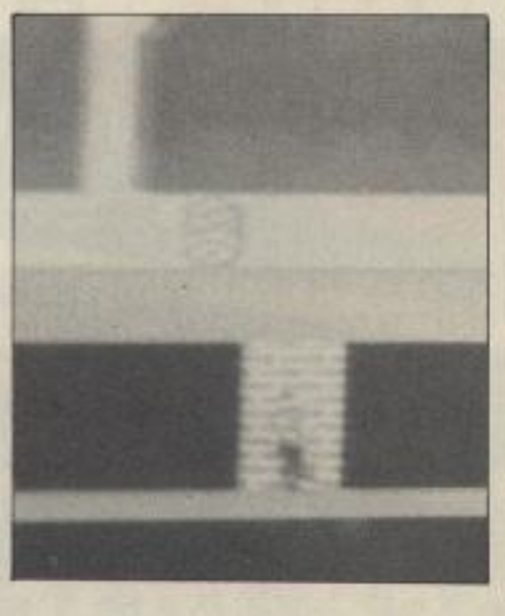
WALK THROUGH WALLS

I have found a way of getting through brick walls in *Pitfall* on my Coleco.

Just make a standing jump towards the wall: ie, press the button and move the joystick simultaneously in the desired direction. This should put you 'inside' the wall (see photo).

To get to the other side, push the joystick in the opposite direction you wish to go.

Chris Short
Tewkesbury, Gloucester



HOW TO PLAY FOREVER (PART II)

Here's even more arcade eggs to add to last month's list.

First, let's get 1,000 points in *Space Invaders De Luxe*. Leave the far left row of invaders while you kill all the rest. The top of the column is one step ahead of the others. You must shoot the column out, top to bottom. When the bottom left invader is shot, a rainbow appears, and you get 1,000 points.

In *Stargate*, you can get

a 2,000 point "Zowie" bonus. Shoot everything but one lander on a wave. Follow the lander until he picks up a humanoid. Shoot the lander with the humanoid underneath. Let the humanoid fall, and position your ship on the planet's surface directly below him. The humanoid will touch you and the surface at the same time. The screen flashes and you are 2,000 points richer.

This is the key to high scores on *Tempest*. First, you must complete the red level that gives you 188,000 bonus points. Then get your score to one of the two-digit combinations listed below (by shooting spikes, worth one point per hit).

After you get the combination you need, kill yourself by walking into enemies. Wait for your desired to happen. These are:

00 freezes screen
01 gives access to bookkeeping totals
05 allows play during attract mode
06 gives 40 free credits, as do 11 and 12
14 gives credit sound without credits
15 does the same
16, 17 and 18 all equal 40 free credits
41 gives last two digits of score switch42 means score increases quickly
46 allows following game to start at green level
50 lets the player move by him/herself
51 does the same
60 lets objects drift down
66 lets them drift right
67 means objects jump
68 lets them float up
70 does the same

All the tricks work if you use the one to play the attract mode (05). If you pause at any of the desired points, it will take place instantly.

Two additional tricks also work from this. 46 generates a random-coloured level with the wrong enemies for that level. For instance, a dark blue level may contain fuseball tankers. And 48 gets you 255 extra men!

Apparently, Atari made a modification kit for *Tempest* to stop these bugs.

Finally, here are a few eggs in *Xevious*.

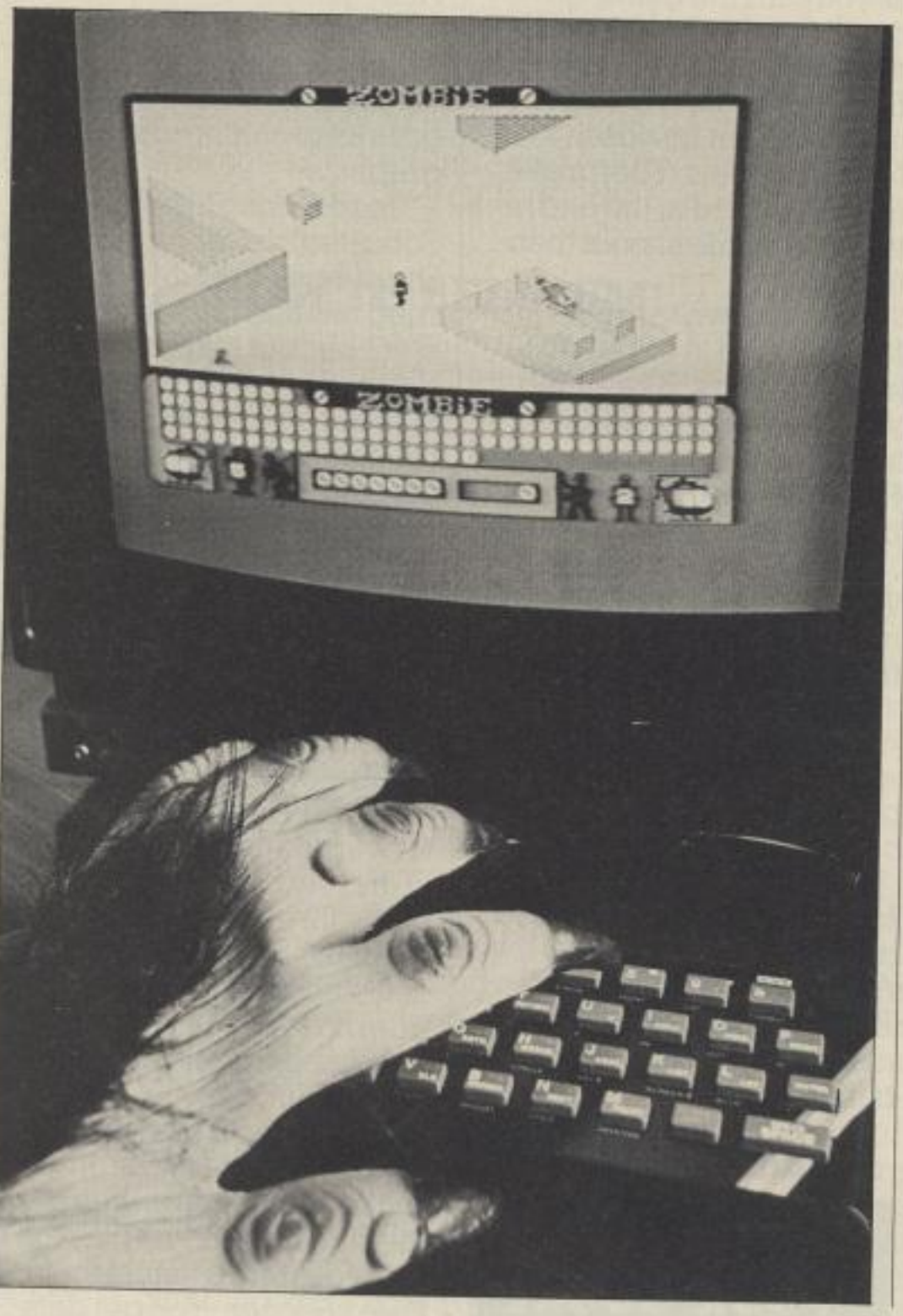
EASTER-EGGS

You can get the programmer's initials by flying right and bombing madly at the start of the game. After a couple of seconds, the screen will say Namco original programmed by EVEZOO.

The hidden targets of *Xevious* appear as huge spires rising out of the ground. Most of the time they appear in groups of up to eight. Unfortunately, most appear very late in the game – but two do so before the mothership. The first is in the second roadway section, just after a horizontal road. The second is just before a short diagonal row of bases just before the mothership. You get 2,000 points for revealing these targets, and another 2,000 for wiping them out.

Also in *Xevious* are hidden flags. The first two appear by horizontal rivers, usually on the banks. The third is on a horizontal line which passes through the river inlet in the middle of the shield storm and just before the desert. The last is at the base of the eagle in the desert.

Ian Boffin



STOMP THE DRAGON

At last! I've finally completed *Dragon-stomper*. After weeks and weeks of maddening frustration, I managed to steal the amulet and defeat the dragon, to the tune of "Rule Britannia".

For any TVG reader who hasn't cracked it, here are some hints.

The paper that acts as your ID can always be found in the flashing castle.

Try to get as much money as you can before you cross the bridge.

The vitamins in the hospital (second load) give you strength of thirty-five in the dragon's cave.

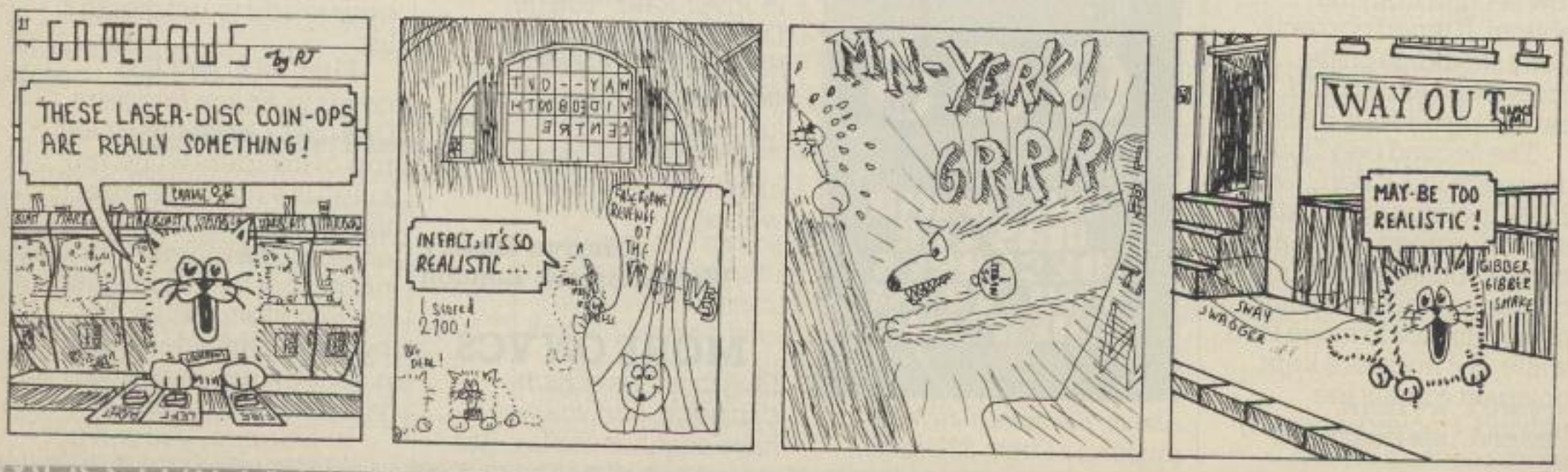
It is advisable to buy two bottles of medicine. These are to combat swamp fever.

Keep to the left side of the cave.

You can't use the unlock while the dragon is conscious (hint, hint).

Do not kill the dragon!

James Pocknell
Wing, Bedford



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